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PAUL AND VIRGINIA.

FROM THE FRENCH OF
BERNARDIN DE ST. PIERRE.

ON the eastern side of the mountains which rise behind the town of Port Louis, in the Isle of France, or the Mauritius, upon a spot which bears the mark of former cultivation, may be seen the vestiges of two humble dwellings. Their situation is peculiar; the space of ground upon which they stand is a valley, formed by lofty rocks, and has only one single entrance, which faces the north. From this opening is seen the mountain, known by the name of "The Height of Discovery," from whence may be distinctly perceived any vessels which approach the island; it is also the station from which the signals are commonly made. At the foot of this mountain stands the town of Port Louis; on the other hand, is the road leading from the town to the Shaddock Grove and the church of the same name, which rears its head above the avenues of bamboo which surround it, and forms an imposing spectacle in the midst of the spacious plain in which it stands; beyond this is a forest, which extends as far as the shore, and terminates the view. The prospect in front presents the Bay of the Tomb; to the right of which lies the Cape of Misfortune; and beyond that, ocean fills up the distance, the monotonous appearance of which is, in some measure, relieved by a few uninhabited islands, the principal of which is the Point of Endeavor, which seems like a bastion amidst the waves.

Turning from the spot whence this varied landscape may be seen, and entering the valley, the ear is struck with the echoes of the mountains incessantly repeating the hollow murmurs of the winds, which agitate the trees in the surrounding forests, and the dashing of the impetuous waves upon the neighboring cliffs. But the scene is far different near the ruined cottages; there all is calm and serene, and the only objects which arrest the attention, are the steep and almost perpendicular rocks which surround and defend the valley. At their base grow clumps of trees, and vegetation appears in its greatest luxuriance on their rifted sides, and even on their "cloud-capped" tops. Their summits are frequently covered by the vivid colors of the rainbow, produced by the frequent showers which they attract, and by which the small river of Fan Palms is swelled and fed. Within this humble valley all is calm, silent, and peaceful. Echo itself is here nearly hushed, and scarcely

repeats the sounds of the waving palms which grow upon the heights. Even the light of day appears to have acquired a new softness; the sunbeams, which shine only at noon into this deep recess, seem divested of their scorching powers. But at break of day the sharp peak of the surrounding rocks, contrasted with the shadows of the mountain, seem like tints of gold and purple upon the sky.

I delighted in resorting to this scene, where, while I enjoyed the calm of retirement and solitude, I could regale my sight with the beauties of the surrounding landscape.

In one of my rambles, I advanced to the foot of the cottages, and was attentively considering their ruins, when a venerable man drew near me; the simplicity of his appearance increased the feelings of respect which his age had excited in my mind. He was dressed according to the ancient custom of this island, barefoot, and supported by a staff of ebony; the expression of his countenance was noble and simple, to which his long silver hair gave a dignity.

I arose and respectfully bowed; he returned my salutation, and after having surveyed me for an instant, came and seated himself by me. Encouraged by this familiarity, I ventured thus to address him: "Father, can you inform me to whom these two cottages have belonged?" "My son," replied he, "these ruined buildings, and this uncultivated piece of ground, were, twenty years since, the property of two families, who passed in them many happy years.

Their history is affecting, but to a European merely touching upon this island on his way to India, the fate of a few obscure individuals would be uninteresting. Who can imagine that happiness can be found amidst poverty and neglect? Men seek only to be acquainted with the history of the great and distinguished in the world, and yet from knowledge of that description no advantage can be derived."

"Father," I replied, "I should judge from your appearance and words that you have gained much experience; if you can devote sufficient time, I entreat you to relate any particulars of the history of the former inhabitants of this desert which you know; I believe that even those men who are the most depraved by the prejudices of mankind, find a pleasure in contemplating the happiness which springs from simplicity and virtue."

The old man acceded to my request, and for a few mo-

ments, reclining his face upon his hand, as if endeavoring to recall past events, he thus commenced his narrative:

"In the year 1726, a young man, a native of Normandy, being unsuccessful in his endeavors to obtain a commission in the French army, and having been refused any support from his own family, determined to seek his fortune in this island.

"M. de la Tour, for this was the name of the young man, brought with him a young woman whom he tenderly loved, and by whom he was equally beloved. She belonged to an ancient and wealthy family of the same province, but he had married her secretly, and without fortune, because her parents withheld their consent, although he had no other fault than that of being descended from a family who were not noble.

"He left her at Port Louis in this island, while he embarked for Madagascar, intending there to purchase a few slaves, to assist him in forming a plantation here. He landed at Madagascar in the commencement of the unhealthy season, which begins in October, and shortly after his arrival he died of the pestilential fever which rages in that island during six months of the year, and which will render it impossible for Europeans ever to form establishments in that part. His merciless creditors seized what property he possessed; his wife shortly became a mother, and found herself a widow in an island where, being quite unknown, she had neither subsistence, credit, or reputation.

"The only one to whom she could look for any assistance was a negro slave.

"Unused to solicit favors from any person, she could not resolve to do so now that she was bereft of him upon whom all her hopes and all her affections were fixed; but her troubles gave her courage, and she resolved, with the assistance of her slave, to cultivate a spot of ground, in order to obtain subsistence.

"In an island where the ground is nearly all uncultivated, the settler may choose any spot which best suits his purpose.

"Thus Madame de la Tour was confined to no particular part, but fled from those situations which were most fertile and favorable to commerce, and sought some nook of the mountain, some secret retreat, where she might live private and unmolested.

"It is common to all suffering creatures to fly, amidst their pains, for refuge to the most wild and desolate spots, as if rugged mountains, and lofty crags, could form a rampart against misfortunes, or the calm of nature could allay the anguish of the soul!

"But that kind and watchful Providence, which is ever ready to succor us when we pray for the supply of our necessary wants, reserved for Madame de la Tour a blessing which riches could not purchase, viz: a friend.

"The place selected by Madame de la Tour for her future residence had been inhabited about a year by a woman, whose disposition was lively, affectionate and good-natured.

"Her name was Margaret.

"She was born in Brittany, of a family of peasants, by whom she was much beloved, and might have been very happy among her rustic employments and pleasures, had she not had the folly to listen to the professions of a gentleman in her neighborhood, who deluded her by a promise of marriage, which he never intended to fulfil.

"But no sooner had he satisfied his guilty passion, than he abandoned her, and cruelly refused to furnish a subsistence for the child of which she was pregnant.

"Overwhelmed with shame, she determined to leave the place where she was known, and to go to some spot where her fault would remain concealed, to some colony at a distance from her own country, where she had lost the only inheritance of a poor peasant girl, her reputation.

"She was accompanied by an old negro slave, whom, with the money lent her by those who pitied her forlorn situation, she had purchased; together they cultivated a small part of this canton.

"Upon the arrival of Madame de la Tour in this spot she found Margaret suckling her child.

"She was delighted to find a person whose condition she judged in some measure similar to her own; and commenced the recital of her past misfortunes and her present wants.

"The kind heart of Margaret melted at this tale of distress; and anxious to ensure the confidence of Madame de la Tour, even at the risk of losing her esteem, she confided to her the history of her own errors.

"As for me," said she, "my punishment is just; but you, madam, so virtuous and so unhappy,"—she could proceed no further, but with tears entreated Madame de la Tour to accept her hut and her friendship.

"Moved by her kind and affectionate conduct, that lady pressed her in her arms, and said, 'Surely Heaven will put a period to my grief, since it inspires you, to whom I am a stranger, with more compassion for my troubles, than I ever met with among my own relations.'

"Previously to this, I knew Margaret, and although I reside at the distance of a league and a half from this place in the woods behind that distant mountain, I considered her as a neighbor.

"In the populous cities of Europe, a wall or a street prevents members of the same family from meeting sometimes for many months, or even years; but in new colonies, we consider those persons as neighbors from whom we are only separated by woods and mountains; and especially at the time when there was little communication between this isle and the Indies, neighborhood gave claim to friendship, and hospitality became more a pleasure than a duty.

"As soon as I heard that Margaret had a guest, I hastened to visit her, hoping that I might be useful to one or both of them. I found in Madame de la Tour a person of an elegant and interesting appearance: the air of melancholy which overspread her fine countenance gave additional power to her beauty.

"She was evidently near her accouchment. I told them that it would be necessary, as well for the interests of their children, as to prevent the intrusion of any other settler, to divide between them the ground contained in this valley, which was about twenty acres; they requested me to make the partition, and I marked out the land as nearly as possible into two equal portions.

"In one was included the upper part of this enclosure, from the summit of the mountain, which, buried among the clouds, gives birth to the little river of Fan-Palms, to the wide clift in that mountain which you see yonder, and which, from the resemblance of its form, is termed the cannon's mouth.

"This wild portion of the enclosure is so encumbered with fragments of rock, and channels worn by the torrents which rush from the heights, that it is with difficulty a path can be found along it; yet it produces noble and lofty trees, and is watered by innumerable rivulets and fountains.

"The other portion of land comprises the plain which extends along the borders of the river of Fan-Palms, as far as the opening where we are seated, from whence the river meanders between two hills, until it discharges itself into the sea.

"The vestiges of meadow land may still be perceived; and although this portion of the enclosure is less rugged, it can hardly be considered more valuable than the other, since in the rainy seasons it is marshy, and in the dry seasons it becomes hardened by the sun, so that it can only be dug with pickaxes or hatchets.

"When I had made this division, I requested the two ladies to draw lots for the possession of the two parts; the higher portion became the property of Madame de la Tour, the lower part that of Margaret.

"They were both well pleased with this allotment. They entreated me not to build their habitations far distant from each other, but to place them in such a situation that they might at all times enjoy the delights of friendship, and be ever ready to render assistance if it were necessary.

"We thought it, however, better that each should have a house of her own, than that they should inhabit the same dwelling.

"Margaret's cottage was situated upon the boundary of her plantation, near the center of the valley: I built close to it a cottage for Madame de la Tour, upon the verge of her own property.

"Thus these two affectionate friends each resided upon her own ground, at the same time that they enjoyed all the advantages of the closest intimacy, and the most unrestrained intercourse. I cut palisades from the mountain, and gathered leaves of the fan-palms on the seashore, with which I constructed these two little dwellings, of which there remains now neither the entrance nor the roof.

"Alas! what does remain is too much for my remembrance. Time, the great destroyer of all things, which does not spare the proud monuments of empires, appears to respect those of friendship in these deserts, as if to perpetuate my grief to the end of my life.

"This cottage was just finished, when Madame de la Tour gave birth to a daughter. I had stood god-father to Margaret's son, who had received the name of Paul; Madame de la Tour requested me to accept the same charge with respect to her child also, together with her friend, who named her Virginia.

"She will be virtuous," said Margaret, "and that will render her happy. My misfortunes have been the consequence of wandering from virtue."

"By the time Madame de la Tour got about again, these two little farms began to attain some value, partly through the care which I occasionally bestowed upon them, but chiefly owing to the incessant and indefatigable labors of the two slaves.

"Margaret's slave, named Domingo, was advancing in years, but was still healthy and strong.

"He had much experience, and a good natural understanding.

"He cultivated indifferently upon the two plantations, those spots which were most fertile, and sowed them with seeds suitable to the particular soil: where the ground was poor he sowed maize, in the rich soil he planted wheat, and rice where the ground was marshy.

"He threw the seeds of gourds and cucumbers at the foot of the rocks, which they crept up and adorned with their luxuriant foliage; in dry spots he planted potatoes, which flourished very well; upon the heights grew the cotton tree, and the sugar cane flourished upon the clayey soils; upon the hills also grew some plants of coffee, where their grain was excellent, though small; on the banks of the river grew plantain trees, which spread their grateful shade over the cottages, and yielded a plentiful supply of fruit throughout the year: lastly, this faithful negro cultivated a few plants of tobacco, to solace his own cares.

"Sometimes his employment consisted in cutting wood for firing from the trees which grew upon the mountains; at others, in hewing pieces of rock to smooth the roads and render the paths more agreeable. He was much attached to Margaret, and equally so to Madame de la Tour, whose negro woman, Mary, he had married at the birth of Virginia; and he was passionately fond of his wife.

"Mary was born at Madagascar, and was skilled in some of the industrious arts of her country.

"She could make baskets, and could weave a sort of stuff with long grass which grows in the woods; she was active, cleanly, and above all, very faithful: her province was to prepare the meals for the two families, to attend to a little poultry, and to go sometimes to Port Louis, to sell the superfluities of these little plantations, which were not inconsiderable.

"If to the personages I have already mentioned, you add a couple of goats, and a dog, who watched the property by night, you will form a complete idea of the household and the revenue of these two little farms.

"The two ladies were employed chiefly in spinning cotton for the use of their families; but, except the produce

of their own industry, they were so destitute of the conveniences of life, that they walked about their own grounds with bare feet, wearing shoes only on a Sunday, when they went at an early hour to attend mass at the church of the Shaddock-Grove, which you see yonder.

"The church is considerably farther than Port Louis, yet they seldom passed through the town, lest they should be treated with derision, because their clothing consisted of the coarse blue cloth of Bengal, such as is usually worn only by slaves.

"But, in the respect yielded to wealth or rank, is there any compensation for domestic happiness?

"These ladies perhaps had a little to suffer from the world, but did not this endear to them their humble home?

"No sooner did their faithful servants perceive them from this mountain, on the road from the Shaddock-Grove, than they quickly ran to the foot of the mountain to assist them in ascending.

"They saw in the countenances of their slaves the joy which their return created.

"At home they beheld neatness, independence, and comfort, the fruits of their own exertions, and from their servants they received those services which are the result of affection and gratitude.

"Being themselves united by similar wants, and having experienced the same trials, they were bound by the closest ties of friendship, and gave each other the tender appellation of friend, sister, and companion; they had but one will, one interest, one table.

"Everything they possessed was in common. If at any time a passion more ardent than friendship raised a pang in their hearts, and forced a sigh from their lips, a pure religion, aided by a conscious innocence, drew their affections towards another life, as the expiring flame flies to heaven when it no longer finds any aliment on earth.

"The happiness of these two innocent families was much augmented by the constant and cheerful discharge of the delightful duties imposed by nature.

"The friendship which already subsisted between these two ladies, was much strengthened and increased at the sight of their beloved children, alike the offspring of unhappy love.

"Frequently one bath, or one cradle, contained both the infants; and they alternately derived nourishment from the bosoms of the two mothers, that they might possess, if possible, an affection for each other more tender than the common ties of friendship.

"Ah, my beloved friend!" exclaimed Madame de la Tour, "we shall each of us have two children, and our children will each have two mothers."

"As two buds, which remain upon two trees of the same description, after all the rest of the branches have been torn off by the rage of the tempest, will, by being each grafted on the other tree, produce fruit much more delicious than if they had continued on the parent stems, so these two children, bereft of all other support, when exchanged at the breast of these to whom they were indebted for their existence, imbibed sentiments more tender than those of brother and sister, son and daughter.

"Already, while watching their slumbers in the cradle, their mothers talked of their future marriage, and the prospect which they fancied was opened before them of conjugal happiness, while it soothed their cares, often called forth tears of bitter regret, that such had been their own lot.

"One mother reflected that all her griefs had arisen from having neglected marriage, while submission to its laws had caused those of the other. One had made herself unhappy by attempting to rise above her condition in life, the other by sinking below it.

But however the cause of their troubles might vary, they found a consolation in reflecting that the beloved objects of their solicitude were far from the cruel prejudices of Europe, which empoison all the sources of true happiness,

and would enjoy without molestation the sweet pleasures of love, together with the blessing of perfect equality.

"The strong affection which characterized their whole life began to show itself already in the bosoms of these children.

"If Paul complained, his mother pointed to Virginia; at the sight of her he smiled, and his tears vanished.

"If any accident befel Virginia, Paul was in distress also, and his cries gave notice of the disaster; but no sooner did this amiable child behold her brother unhappy, than she would suppress her complaints, rather than give him pain.

"When I visited them, I always found these children of nature quite naked, as was the custom of this island, and could almost fancy that I beheld the constellation of the Twins, as I looked at them, locked in each other's arms, making their feeble attempts to walk for which they had scarcely yet attained sufficient strength.

"At night it was with difficulty that they could be separated, and they frequently reposed in the same cradle, their cheeks, their bosoms close together, and their hands round each other's necks, and sleeping locked in the softest embraces.

"The first words which their infant voices learned to utter were the tender appellations of brother and sister, by which they distinguished each other, and childhood is unacquainted with any language to express stronger affection.

"The education which they received tended to augment this early friendship, by directing it to the supply of their mutual wants.

"As soon as Virginia was old enough to accept such a charge, all the household economy, the care of preparing their rural repasts, became her province; and she felt herself amply repaid for her trouble by the praises and kisses of her brother.

"As for Paul, always in action, he assisted Domingo in cultivating the garden, or followed him into the woods, where, with a little hatchet, he imitated the labors of the faithful negro.

"If in his walks he espied a beautiful flower, fine fruit, or a nest of young birds, he climbed the steepest rocks, and brought them home to present to his beloved sister.

"If you met either of these children you might be certain that the other was at no great distance. As I was one day descending the mountain which leads to their cabins, I saw Virginia at the farther end of the garden, running towards the house; her head was covered with her petticoat, which she had turned up from the back to shelter her from a sudden shower of rain.

"At first I thought she was alone; but as I hastened to her in order to assist her, I perceived that the same canopy sheltered Paul, whom she held by the arm.

"Both were extremely diverted with the idea of their newly invented umbrella.

"Their two lovely countenances, enveloped in the petticoat, which was distended by the wind, brought to my recollection the children of Leda, enclosed in the same shell.

"The art of assisting and pleasing each other formed their sole study and delight.

"Of all other acquirements they were perfectly ignorant; they had never learned either to read or write.

"Curiosity had never led them to dive into the secrets of other times, and their researches extended no farther than the boundaries of their native mountains and plains.

"They had no idea that the world extended beyond the shores of their island, and within its limits were comprised all their hopes, all their affections.

"All the powers of their souls were employed with their mutual tenderness, and that of their mothers.

"No useless sciences had ever wearied their young minds, or drawn tears from their eyes; never had they been disgusted by long or dry lessons of morality, for the thought of ill had not entered their innocent breasts.

"They were ignorant that it was crime to steal, for they had no separate interests—to be intemperate, for their food

was simple, and left to their own discretion—or to deceive, for they had nothing they wished to conceal.

"Never had their young imaginations been affrighted by the thought that God has punishments in store for rebellious children, since from maternal tenderness sprang natural filial affection and obedience.

"They had never been taught to dread religion as strict or harsh; on the contrary, it had been represented to them in the mildest and most amiable light, and if they did not offer up long and unmeaning prayers in the churches, they raised to heaven innocent hands, and hearts devoted to virtue and love to their parents, and this most acceptable worship they could offer up alike in every place.

"Thus their early childhood passed away like the beautiful dawn which precedes the bright days of summer.

"Already they relieved their mothers from the burden of the household cares.

"As soon as the crowing of the cock announced the break of day, Virginia shook off drowsy sleep, and hastened to the neighboring spring to draw water, then returning to the house, she prepared the breakfast for the family.

"Soon after, when the rising sun lighted the sharp points of the rocks, Margaret and her child went to offer up their morning prayer with Madame de la Tour, at her dwelling: after this, they took together their first repast. Frequently they were seated at the door of the cottage, upon the grass, having a canopy of plantains, the solid fruit of which tree presented them with food ready prepared by nature, while its long glossy leaves answered the purpose of a table cloth.

"An abundance of wholesome and plain nourishment gave growth and vigor to the persons of these children, and their countenances expressed the purity of their souls.

"When Virginia was twelve years of age, her figure was nearly formed; her fair face was shaded with a quantity of light hair, and the delicacy of her countenance was heightened by her bright blue eyes and coral lips.

"When she spoke, her eyes sparkled with vivacity; but when she was silent, their natural cast upwards gave to her countenance an appearance of extreme sensibility, if not rather of melancholy.

"Paul possessed all the stability of manhood, mingled with the graces of youth.

"His figure was rather taller than that of Virginia, his complexion darker, and, from constant exposure to the air, had become rather sun-burnt: his nose was aquiline, and his fine black eyes, while they added expression to his manly features, would have given him a fierce appearance, had they not been shaded, and their brightness softened by the long eye-lashes, which spread an air of mildness over his face.

"Although naturally ever active, no sooner did his sister approach, than he quitted his employment or amusement, and seated himself by her.

"From the natural but elegant posture in which they sat, and particularly from their beautiful white feet, uncumbered with any covering, a stranger might be led to suppose that he beheld a group of antique marbles, representing some of the children of Niobe; but when the smiles of fraternal love beamed on their countenances, as they looked upon each other, they would rather have been taken for angelic beings, or for some of those happy creatures, whose very essence is love, and who need not to have recourse to words and language to express their tender and exalted friendship.

"The increasing beauty of her daughter filled the mind of Madame de la Tour with uneasiness and bitter anticipations for the future.

"When she reflected that this lovely girl had no protector to supply her place, should she be cut off, she would frequently with agony of mind say to me, 'If I should die, what would become of Virginia without fortune?'

"Madame de la Tour had a relation in France still living; she was of high rank, was rich, and far advanced in years, but a great bigot.

"She had severely resented the marriage of her niece to M. de la Tour, and had so cruelly refused to give her any assistance, that Madame de la Tour had resolved never, upon any emergency, to apply to her again.

"But now that she had become a mother, all feelings of wounded pride vanished; she no longer, where the interest of her beloved child was involved, feared a refusal.

"She wrote to her aunt an account of the sudden death of her husband, of the birth of her daughter, and of the state of destitution in which she was left, far from her country, without support, and burdened with a child.

"To this pathetic appeal she had received no answer; her lofty spirit feared not now humiliation, but could stoop under the influence of maternal tenderness, to the reproaches of her relation, who she knew well would never pardon her, for having preferred in him whom she chose as the partner of her life, merit to fortune and family.

"She continued to write by every opportunity, hoping to excite in her some compassion, if not for herself, for her beloved Virginia; but year after year elapsed, without her receiving any answer to her letters.

"At length, in 1738, three years after the arrival of M. de la Bourdonnais, as governor of this isle, Madame de la Tour was informed that he had a letter to deliver to her from her aunt.

"Anticipating the reward of her patience, she ran instantly to Port Louis, without paying any regard to her dress—maternal joy and hope raised her above paying any regard to the opinion of man.

"The governor had indeed a letter for her, from her aunt; but far from realizing her wishes, it proved a death-blow to all her hopes.

"This unfeeling woman wrote to her niece, that she deserved her lot, for having married an adventurer, and, as she termed him, a libertine; that the indulgence of the passions always brought its punishment, and that she ought to consider the premature death of her husband as a visitation from Heaven; that she had done well to pass over into the isles, at a distance from her native country to conceal her disgrace, rather than to degrade her family in France; but that, after all, she had little reason to complain, for the spot she had chosen was in a fertile land, and good climate, and that everyone, the indolent excepted, had made fortunes there, who had tried the experiment.

"Having thus blamed her niece, this unfeeling woman concluded by praising herself: she said, that in order to avoid the unhappy consequences of marriage, she had always resolutely preferred a single life.

"The truth is, that being very ambitious, she had refused to marry anyone but a person of quality: but although she was very rich, and had lived among the fashionable circles, where little else than money is sought for, she could never meet with any person of rank willing to connect himself with one so unamiable and hard-hearted.

"She added in a postscript, that after much consideration, she had strongly recommended her niece to the governor.

"She had done so, indeed, but had done it in a manner too common in the present day, a manner which renders a professed protector more formidable than a declared enemy.

"Under the semblance of pitying, she had grossly calumniated her niece, and had thrown blame upon her, to justify her own cruel conduct towards her.

"Madame de la Tour, whom no unprejudiced person could have beheld without an emotion of interest and respect, was received coldly by M. de la Bourdonnais, who was prepared to dislike her.

"To the account which she gave him of her own situation, and that of her daughter, he replied briefly:

"I will consider; we will see; time may explain matters; many others are unfortunate as well as you. You

have offended a respectable relation; you have acted very wrong."

"Madame de la Tour returned home with a heart almost broken by grief and disappointment.

"She entered her cottage, and, without speaking, threw her letter upon the table. At length she said to her friend:

"And is this the reward of eleven years of patient expectation?"

"But as Madame de la Tour was the only person in this little circle who could read, she at length sufficiently conquered her feelings to peruse aloud the cruel letter by which they had been so much agitated.

"When she had finished, Margaret exclaimed with emotion:

"What need have we of assistance from your family? Has God, our all-powerful protector, forsaken us? He only is our father, and to Him we will look for support; He has never, even to this time, suffered us to want: we have hitherto lived happily, why despair of the future? have you so little fortitude?"

"And seeing the tears of Madame de la Tour still flowed fast, she embraced her in the tenderest manner. 'My dear friend!' said she, 'my beloved companion!'—she could say no more—her voice was lost in her sobs.

"At this affecting scene, Virginia, bathed in tears, turned alternately towards her mother and Margaret, and pressed them to her throbbing bosom; while Paul, whose manly countenance burned with anger, stood with hands clasped and his feet stamping on the ground, not knowing whom to blame, or on whom to take revenge for this scene of misery.

"The sobs and cries of their mistresses, and the indignation of Paul, attracted the attention of Mary and Domingo, and the cottage resounded with lamentations.

"Ah, madam! Oh, my beloved mistress! My dearest mother, do not weep."

"At length the grief of Madame de la Tour became softened by such tender marks of friendship, and she was sufficiently composed to embrace Paul and Virginia, and said, with an air of assumed tranquillity, 'My children, you are the cause of my trouble, but from you I derive the sweetest consolation; misery has reached me from afar, but happiness I have ever present with me.'

"The children did not understand these words; but when they saw that she had become tranquil, they smiled, and caressed her.

"Thus was happiness restored to this innocent family, and this slight disturbance was but as a storm on a fine summer day.

"Every day developed some traces of the good sense and amiable disposition of these children.

"One Sunday, their mothers having left home for the purpose of attending the early mass at the church of Shaddock-Grove, a negro woman presented herself beneath the plantains which shaded the cottages.

"Her appearance was calculated to inspire compassion; her form, wasted almost to a skeleton, was covered merely with a few rags, the wretched remains of her miserable clothing.

"As soon as she perceived Virginia, who was preparing the family breakfast, she fell at her feet, and cried, 'My good young lady, have pity upon a poor wandering slave! It is a month since I entered these woods; during which time I have roamed about, half dead with hunger, and often pursued by the hunters and their dogs. I fled from my master, a wealthy planter on the borders of the Black River, who has used me most cruelly, as you may judge from the scars upon my back and sides.'

"The poor creature here showed Virginia her body, deeply lacerated by the treatment she had received. She added, 'Despair had prompted me to drown myself; but hearing that you resided here, I thought I need not die yet, since there are still some good people in this country.'

"At this touching recital, Virginia was much affected,

'Unhappy woman,' said she, 'take courage, here is food,' and she gave her the breakfast which had been prepared for the family: the poor slave eagerly devoured this seasonable relief.

"When her hunger was appeased, Virginia said to her. 'Unfortunate woman, can I do you any good, by asking forgiveness for you of your master? His heart must be hard indeed, if the sight of your wretched condition does not move him with pity; will you conduct me to his habitation?' 'Angel of Heaven!' replied the poor negress, 'I will follow you whithersoever you direct.'

"Virginia sought her brother, and requested him to accompany her. The slave went before, and guided them along winding and difficult paths, through thick woods, over the steepest mountains, which they climbed with great difficulty, and across rivers, through which they were obliged to wade.

"At length, after much fatigue, they reached the Black River, and at the foot of a precipice they perceived a well-built house, surrounded by extensive plantations, where a great number of slaves were employed in various kinds of labor.

"Among them walked their master, smoking his pipe, and carrying in his hand a kind of switch. He was above the middle height, thin, and of a dark complexion; his eyes were sunk deep in his head, and his brows were contracted.

"Virginia, supported by Paul, approached him, and with the greatest earnestness, begged of him, for the love of God, to pardon his poor slave, who waited trembling at a few paces behind.

"At first, he was not inclined to attend to these children, whom he saw so meanly clothed; but when he beheld the elegant form of Virginia, and the luxuriant curls, which, escaping from under her blue cap, shaded her lovely countenance; when he heard the dulcet tones of her voice, which, while her whole frame trembled, implored his compassion, he removed the pipe from his mouth, and raising his stick, swore with a tremendous oath, that he would pardon his slave, not for the love of Heaven, but for the sake of her who asked him. Virginia then made a sign to the slave that she had gained forgiveness for her, and hastened away, followed by Paul.

"They climbed the steep side of the mountain which they had before descended, and having with difficulty attained the summit, they reposed themselves at the foot of a tree, almost exhausted with hungry, thirst, and fatigue.

"They had taken no refreshments previous to leaving the cottage, and had walked more than five leagues. Paul said to Virginia, 'My dear sister, it is past noon; you are faint from hungry and thirst, we can obtain no refreshment on this mountain, let us descend, and request food of the master of the poor slave.'

"'Oh, no,' replied Virginia; 'he alarmed me too much. Remember what our mothers have often told us, "The bread of the wicked is like stones in the mouth."'" 'What can we do then?' rejoined Paul; 'there is no fruit upon these trees, and I do not perceive even a lemon or a tamarind to refresh you.'

"When he had finished these words, they attentively listened, and heard the water falling from a neighboring rock.

"To this spot they hastened, and having allayed their thirst at this crystal fountain, they gathered some cresses, which grew on the borders of the stream.

"While they strayed in all parts of the woods, in search of some food more solid than that they had found, Virginia found a young palm tree.

"The sort of cabbage which is enveloped in the leaves at the top of the tree forms an excellent diet; but the stem, although not thicker than a man's leg, was more than sixty feet in altitude.

"The wood of this tree consists entirely of fine filaments, but it is covered with a bark so hard as to turn the edge of a hatchet, and Paul was destitute even of a knife.

"After some consideration, he determined to set fire to the tree; but again there appeared a difficulty, he had no implements to kindle a fire with; for among the rocks with which the island abounds, I believe it would not be possible to find a single flint, and he had no steel.

"However necessity furnished him with an expedient; he recollected the manner in which the negroes obtained fire.

"He immediately sought a branch of a tree perfectly dry, and placing it between his feet, made a small hole in the end with a sharp stone; he took a branch of a different sort of wood, and sharpened it to a point, and placed it in the hole which he had previously made; he then turned it quickly around for a few minutes, till he beheld sparks and smoke issue from the point of contact.

"Paul collected a quantity of dried grass and fern, and made a fire at the root of the tree, which fell with great noise.

"The fire assisted him in clearing the cabbage from the long leaves which surrounded it, which, from their sharp points and thickness, would otherwise have caused him much trouble.

"Paul and Virginia ate a part of the cabbage raw, and the remainder they cooked upon the ashes, which was equally savory.

"They made this repast, though frugal, with much delight; it was sweetened by the remembrance of the good action they had performed in the morning.

"The only circumstance that alloyed their joy, was the thought of the uneasiness which their absence would give their mothers.

"To this subject Virginia frequently recurred; but Paul, who felt his strength restored by the refreshment he had taken, assured her that it would not be long ere they reached home, and set at rest the fears of their anxious parents.

"When they rose to set off, they were again involved in difficulty; they had no guide, and were entirely unacquainted with the way.

"Paul, whose high spirit was not soon subdued, said to Virginia:

"'The sun shines full upon our cottages at noon; we must repossess that mountain with three points, which we crossed this morning. Let us go, my dear sister.'

"This mountain is called 'The Three Peaks.'"

"They descended the precipice of the Black River on the northern side, and arrived after an hour's walk, on the banks of a large river, which presented a formidable obstacle to their farther progress.

"Of this island some parts are so little known that many of its rivers and mountains still remain without a name.

"The large stream, on the borders of which Paul and Virginia stood, rolls foaming over a bed of rocks.

"Virginia was terrified by the noise of the water, and could not summon courage to wade through it.

"Paul then took her on his back, and thus loaded, went over the rugged rocks which formed the bed of the river, careless of danger and the tumultuous noise of the water, frequently encouraging Virginia, by saying:

"'Do not be afraid, I feel very strong with you. If the planter by the Black River had refused to grant to you the pardon of his slave, I would have fought with him.'

"'What,' exclaimed Virginia, 'would you have fought with that wicked man? To what have I exposed you? My God! how easy it is to do wrong! how difficult is it to do well!'

"When Paul had gained the opposite shore, he wished to continue carrying his sister, and thought himself sufficiently strong to climb with her the mountain of the Three

* There are many mountains, of which the summits are formed in the shape of peaks, from whence flow numerous rivers and streamlets, which fertilize the surrounding country; and unlike most rivers in the tropical climates, are never dry, as the high tops of the mountains constantly attract rains from which they are supplied. This admirable provision for the wants of these scorched lands is alluded to in St. Pierre's "Studies of Nature."

Peaks, although they were then at half a league distance from it; but his strength failed in the attempt, and he was obliged to put his burden down, and to rest himself by her side.

"Virginia then said, 'My dear brother, the day is declining; you have still some strength left, mine is quite exhausted; let me remain here, and you hasten home to ease the fears of our mothers.'

"'Oh no!' said Paul, 'I will not leave you. If night surprise us in this wood, I will kindle a fire, and bring down some more palm trees; the cabbages you shall eat, and of the leaves I will form a covering to shelter you from the cold.'

"By this time Virginia was a little rested; she pulled from the trunk of an old tree which overhung the bank of the river, some long leaves of hart's-tongue, which grew near its root.

"With these she made a sort of buskin, with which she covered her feet which were much lacerated by the sharp stones in the paths by which they had come; for, in her haste to do good, she had entirely forgotten her shoes.

"She felt her feet much relieved by the freshness of the leaves; and breaking off a branch of bamboo, she continued her walk, leaning one hand upon Paul and the other upon her staff!

"Thus they slowly walked through the woods; but the height of the trees and the thickness of their foliage soon concealed from their sight the mountain of the Three Peaks, by which they directed their course, and also the setting sun.

"At length, they found that they had unconsciously wandered from the beaten path, and had gone into a labyrinth of trees and rocks, which appeared to have no opening.

"Paul desired Virginia to sit down, and ran backwards and forwards, almost frantic, to seek some path which might lead them out of this forest; but his search was in vain. He climbed up a lofty tree, from whence he hoped, at least, to have descried the mountain of the Three Peaks; but he saw around him nothing but the trees of the wood, the tops of which were gilded by the setting sun.

"The shadows of the mountains had already overspread the forests of the valleys.

"The wind ceased, as it usually does at sunset.

"The deepest silence reigned in this awful solitude, which was broken only by the cries of the stags who come to repose in that unfrequented spot.

"Paul, hoping that some hunter might be passing, and hear his voice, called as loud as he was able:

"'Come, come and assist Virginia!'

"But his call was answered only by the echoes of the forest, which again and again repeated 'Virginia! Virginia!' and at length he descended from the tree, overcome with chagrin and terror.

"The next reflection which Paul made was, how they should contrive to pass the night in the forest; but he could discover neither a fountain nor a palm tree, nor could he find a single branch sufficiently dry to kindle a fire.

"Then did he forcibly feel the sense of his own inability; this thought made him weep.

"Virginia said to him:

"'Do not not weep, my dear brother; your grief does but increase mine. I have caused not only your sorrow, but all the uneasiness which our parents are at this moment suffering on our account. Oh, how very imprudent I have been!' and she began to shed tears: 'however,' she said to Paul, 'God is our sole resource; let us pray to Him, he will pity us.'

"Scarcely had they risen from prayer, when they heard the barking of a dog. 'It is,' said Paul, 'a dog belonging to some hunter, who comes at night to this lone place, to lie in wait for the stags.'

"Shortly they heard the dog bark louder. 'I think,' said Virginia, 'that is Fidele, our own dog. I surely rec-

ollect his voice; can we then be so near home—at the foot of our own mountain?'

"In an instant Fidele was at their feet, barking, howling, and almost overwhelmed them with his caresses.

"They had not recovered from their surprise, when they saw Domingo running towards them. At the sight of this good old negro, who wept with joy, they were too much overcome to utter a word.

"When Domingo had in some measure recovered himself, he said, 'Oh, my dear children, how uneasy your mothers have been on your account. How were they astonished, when, on returning from where I had accompanied them, not to find you! Mary, who was at some distance at work, could not tell us where you had gone. I ran to all parts of the plantation, not knowing where to seek you. As a last resource, I took some of your left off clothes, and made Fidele* smell them, and instantly as if the poor animal had understood my meaning, he began to scent your path; and conducted me, wagging his tail, to the borders of Black River: there I met with a planter, who told me that you had this morning brought back a negro woman, a slave of his, whose pardon he had granted at your request; but, what was the pardon! he pointed her out to me, with her feet chained to a billet of wood, and an iron collar with three hooks fastened round her neck.

"Leaving that part, Fidele, still on the scent, conducted me up the precipice of the Black River, on the summit of which he stopped, and barked loudly.

"This was on the border of a spring near a fallen palm tree, and close to the embers of fire which still smoked; at last we reached this spot.

"We are at the mountain of the Three Peaks, but are still four leagues from home; but you had better eat something, which will give you strength.'

"He set before them cakes, fruit, and a large gourd filled with a liquor, which was made of wine, water, and sugar, flavored with lemon juice and nutmeg, which their mothers had prepared.

"Virginia was distressed when she heard in what a state the poor slave was, and her grief was increased by the thought of the uneasiness they had occasioned to their mothers. She repeatedly exclaimed, 'Oh, how difficult it is to do good!'

"While they partook of this seasonable refreshment, Domingo lighted a fire; and having found among the rocks a peculiar sort of wood, which possesses the property of burning when quite green, and throws out a great blaze he made a torch, which, as night had surprised them, he lighted.

"Thus they had prepared to set forward on their journey, but they were hindered by the discovery that the feet of Paul and Virginia were too much swelled and inflamed to admit of their walking any further.

"In this dilemma, Domingo hesitated whether it would be better to leave them, while he went in search of help, or to pass the night with them in that spot.

"The time has long since passed away,' said he, 'when I used to carry you both together in my arms; but now you are grown big, and I am grown old.'

"While he thus deliberated, a troop of Maroon negroes appeared within twenty paces of them; the chief of the band drew near to Paul and Virginia, and said to them, 'Be not afraid, good little white people; we saw you pass this morning in company with a negro woman belonging to a planter on the borders of Black River, of whom you went to ask her pardon. In token of our gratitude, we will carry you home upon our shoulders.'

"He immediately made a sign, and four of the stoutest of the band formed a sort of couch, with branches of trees and lianas, in which they seated the two children, and placed it on their shoulders; thus they proceeded towards

* This instance of sagacity, displayed by Domingo and his dog Fidele, resembles closely a trait related concerning a savage and his dog, by M. de Crèvecoeur in his admirable work, entitled "Lettres d'un Cultivateur Américain."

home, Domingo carrying his lighted torch in front, and accompanied by the rejoicings of the whole troop.

"This scene affected Virginia, who said, 'My dear brother, God never lets a good action go unrewarded.'

"They arrived about midnight at the foot of their own mountain, on the ridge of which they saw several fires burning.

"No sooner did they begin to ascend, than they heard the voices of their mothers, crying out, 'Is it you, my children?'

"They answered, together with the negroes—'Yes, it is us!' and shortly after this, they beheld their anxious parents and Mary running towards them, carrying lighted sticks in their hands.

"'Whence do you come, unhappy children?' exclaimed Madame de la Tour, 'what agony have we suffered on your account?'

"'We come,' replied Virginia, 'from the Black River, where we went to ask the pardon of a Maroon slave, to whom I gave our breakfast this morning, because she appeared ready to perish with hunger, and these Maroon negroes have brought us home.'

"Madame de la Tour was so much overcome as to be unable to speak; but she tenderly embraced her amiable daughter; and Virginia, who felt her mother's tears wet her face, exclaimed, 'This is a rich reward for all the hardships I have suffered!'

"Margaret, not less delighted, pressed Paul to her bosom, and cried, 'And you too, my dear child, have done a benevolent action!'

"When they reached the hut, they rewarded the kindness of the negroes towards the children with plenty of food, and sent them back to their woods, praying for all kinds of happiness for the good white people.

"To these two families every day brought tranquillity and happiness.

"Their peace was disturbed neither by envy nor ambition.

"They were not desirous of vain reputation, which can be gained perhaps only by intrigue, and which the breath of calumny disperses in an instant.

"It was their highest aim to secure the approbation of their own conscience.

"In this island, where, as in the case of all European colonies, the conversation chiefly turns upon the faults of the inhabitants, their virtues, and even their names were unknown.

"If at any time a traveler on the road of the Shaddock-Grove inquired of the inhabitants of the plain, 'Who lives in those two little cottages?' he always received for answer, even from those who did not know them, 'They are good people.'

"Thus they lived, like the modest violet, which, concealed behind the thorny bushes, exhales its fragrance while itself remains unseen.

"They had entirely excluded from their conversation all calumny, which, while it preserves an appearance of justice, steels the heart, and induces hatred and falsehood; for it is impossible to avoid hating those whom we believe to be wicked; and we cannot live with those whom we hate, unless we conceal our dislike under a false exterior of benevolence and display of friendship which we do not feel.

"But without adverting to particular instances, they conversed respecting the best means of doing good to mankind generally; and although they had not the power to perform all their plans of usefulness, they had the inclination to do so as far as possible.

"By living thus in solitude, their sympathies, far from becoming blunted, became more acute; and their hearts daily expanded to admit of every kindly affection.

"If their conversation was not enlivened by anecdotes of their neighbors, and the scandalous rumors which floated in society, the contemplation of the beauties of nature gave a constant cheerfulness, which spread a charm over all they did.

"They were filled with admiration of the bounty of that Providence which had provided happiness for them, even among those barren rocks, and had furnished them with pleasure, ever fresh and new.

"At the age of twelve years, Paul was stronger and more intelligent than most Europeans at fifteen; he employed his leisure in embellishing the plantations which Domingo cultivated.

"He had accompanied him to the neighboring woods, and taken up the roots of the young lemon trees, oranges, and tamarinds, the round heads of which are of the freshest green, together with date palm trees, producing fruit filled with cream, which has a sweet flavor, and exhales a perfume like that of the orange flower.

"He planted these trees, which were then of a considerable size, around the little enclosure.

"He had also sown the seeds of many plants, which the second year bear flowers or fruit; the agathis, the stalk of which is surrounded by long clusters of white flowers that hang upon it like the crystal pendants of a luster; the Persian lilac which elevates its gray flax colored branches; the pappaw tree, the trunk of which bears no branches, but it is set round with green melons, bearing on their heads leaves like those of the fig tree.

"He had also planted the seeds and kernels of the gum tree, terminalia, mangoes, alligator pears, the guava, and the bread tree, and the narrow leaved eugenia; the greater part of these already rewarded his care with the fruit.

"His industrious hand had spread fertility even on the most barren parts of the plantation.

"Different kinds of aloes, the common Indian fig, adorned with yellow flowers spotted with red, and the thorny five angled touch-thistle, grew on the highest parts of the rocks, and apparently aimed at reaching the long lianas, which ornamented the steepest part of the mountain with their blue and crimson flowers.

"These trees were disposed so as to present a view of the whole of them at once.

"In the middle of this basin, he placed the plants of the lowest growth; next around them grew the shrubs; these were succeeded by trees of a moderate size, and above them rose the lofty groves which border the inclosure.

"Thus, from its center, this plantation looked like a verdant amphitheater, ornamented with fruits and flowers, producing a variety of vegetables, and a chain of meadow land, with fields of corn and rice.

"He had followed the designs of nature strictly, in blending these various productions.

"He had thrown upon the rising grounds such grains as are suitable to the highest spots, and near the springs, and on the borders of the rivulets, such grains as grow floating upon the water.

"Every plant was placed in the soil which seemed most adapted for it; the waters, as they rushed from the summit of the mountains, formed in some parts fountains, and in others, canals bright as mirrors, in which were reflected the verdure of the surrounding plantations, the trees in blossom, the bending rocks, and the azure of heaven.

"Although this ground was very irregular, Paul had so contrived that there was no difficulty in approaching any part of the inclosure.

"He had taken the advice of all his family, as well as mine, respecting the best means of accomplishing this object.

"He had smoothed a path around the valley, and had made smaller ones which led to the center.

"Even the most barren spots he had rendered subservient to his plans, and blended smooth walks with the rugged rocks, and harmonized the productions of nature with the more delicate varieties produced by cultivation.

"He formed pyramids of the rolling stones which are so profusely scattered over the island; at the foot of these he placed monld, and planted rose bushes, the Barbadoes flower fence, and many shrubs which delight to climb the rocks:

"In a short space, the freshest verdure and the most beautiful flowers concealed these somber pyramids.

"In the hollow recesses of the aged trees, many of which grew near the borders of purling rivulets, you might enjoy, in arbors impervious to the scorching of the sun, the most refreshing coolness; from thence a path led to a clump of forest trees, among which grew a cultivated tree charged with fruit.

"In one place appeared a smiling cornfield, in another an orchard. From that avenue the cottages might be descried; from this the view was terminated by the inaccessible summits of the mountain.

"No object can be seen, even at noon, from that tufted bower of gum trees, so thickly interwoven with lianas; while from the point of the neighboring rock, might be obtained a view not only of the whole plantation, but even of the distant ocean, where we sometimes perceived a vessel coming from Europe, or returning thither laden with the produce of southern climes.

"On this rock did these two innocent families meet in the evening, and enjoy in silence the pleasures springing from the contemplation of the beauties of nature.

"They had distinguished the charming retreats of this labyrinth by names the most agreeable.

"That rock which I pointed out to you as the spot from whence the approach of a vessel to the island may be discerned, is called 'The Discovery of Friendship.'

"In that spot Paul and Virginia had for their amusement planted a bamboo, upon which they hoisted a white handkerchief whenever they saw me coming, as a signal of my approach; this they had learned from observing a flag hoisted upon a neighboring mountain, at the sight of a vessel out at sea.

"On the stem of this reed I thought of engraving an inscription.

"In the course of my travels, the pleasure which I enjoyed at the sight of a statue, or a vestige of antiquity, has been far exceeded by my feelings when I met with a well-written inscription.

"It seems almost as if a human voice came from the stone, which, being heard amidst the lapse of ages, reminds man that even in that solitary spot he is not alone, and that others, perhaps greater than himself, have in the place where he is standing, felt, thought, and suffered, as he does.

"Should the inscription be a record of some ancient nation, which has ceased to exist, the soul is carried back through a long series of ages, and strongly impressed with the idea of its own immortality, by the feeling that a thought has survived the wreck of a large empire.

"The following are the lines which I inscribed on the little mast of Paul and Virginia's flag:

"Fratres Helenæ, lucida sidera,
Ventorumque regat pater,
Obstrictis aliis, præter lapyga."
Horace.

"May the brothers of Helen, lucid stars like you, and the father of the winds, guide you, and may you only feel the breath of the zephyr.

"Upon the bark of a gum tree, under the shade of which Paul sometimes seated himself to view the agitated sea, I engraved the following line from Virgil:

"Fortunatus et ille Deos qui novit agrestes."

"Happy art thou, my son, to know only the pastoral divinities.

"And over the entrance to the cottage of Madame de la Tour, where the two families usually assembled, I wrote:

"At securâ quies, et nescia fallere vita."

"Here is a calm conscience, and a life ignorant of deceit."

"My Latin did not please Virginia at all; she thought the inscription at the foot of the weather-flag much too long, as well as too learned.

"I should have preferred," she said, "Always agitated but constant."

"This," replied I, "would suit spotless virtue."

"My answer made her blush.

"Every surrounding object partook of the sensibility of these happy families; to objects apparently the most indifferent, they had given the most tender appellations.

"A border of orange and plantain trees, planted round a green sward, on which Paul and Virginia sometimes danced, was denominated 'Concord.'

"An old tree, under which their mothers used to sit and talk over the misfortunes of former times, was called 'The Tears wiped away.'

"To small plots of ground, where they had sown corn, peas, and strawberries, they gave the name of Brittany and Normandy.

"Mary and Domingo, in imitation of their mistresses, were desirous of remembering their native spots in Africa, and gave the names of Angola and Foullepoin to parts where grew the materials of which they made baskets, and where they had planted a calabassia tree.

"Thus did these banished families, by the aid of the productions of their native climes, cherish the sympathies which bind us to our country, and soften the pains of a foreign land.

"Alas! I have seen those scattered trees, those fountains, nay, even those stones, which now lie dispersed, animated by a thousand soothing appellations; but now, they, like the plains of Greece, present nothing but ruins and affecting recollections.

"But of all this enclosure, no part was more delightful than that called 'The repose of Virginia.'

"At the base of a rock, which was called 'The Discovery of Friendship,' is a nook from whence issues a fountain, and a short distance from its source, a little spot of marshy ground, in the midst of a rich field of pasture.

"Immediately upon the birth of Paul, I gave Margaret an Indian cocoa, which had been a present to me, and advised her to plant it upon this fenny ground, in order that at some future time it might serve as a register of her son's age.

"Under the same idea, Madame de la Tour planted a similar tree to mark the birth of Virginia.

"Upon the trees produced from these fruits, depended all the records of these two families; one was called the tree of Paul, the other that of Virginia.

"Their growth was in proportion to the growth of the young people, their height unequal, but at the end of twelve years, they were taller than the cottages.

"Their young stems were already interwoven, and their clusters of fruit hung over the basin of the fountain.

"This was the only artificial decoration which this rugged spot had received; except this, it had remained as nature had designed it.

"Large plants of maiden-hair displayed their green and dark stars upon its humid sides, and tufts of wave-leaved hart's-tongue, like long ribands of a purplish green color, floated in the winds.

"On the same part of the rock grew the Madagascar periwinkle, whose flowers are similar to the red gilliflower, and the capsicum, the cloves of which are a more glowing red than coral.

"Around these grew the herb of balm, whose leaves are enclosed within the heart, and the sweet basil, the scent of which resembles the odor of the gilliflower; from these the air was perfumed to some distance round.

"The graceful lianas hung, like an elegant drapery, from the highest points of the mountain, and covered the sides of the rocks with imposing canopies of verdure; thither the seabirds resorted to pass the night, attracted by the stillness of the scene.

"At the close of the day, we frequently beheld the curlew and the stint, flying by the seashore, and high in the air the cardinal, the white bird of the tropic, also fled from the solitudes of the Indian Ocean with the star of the day.

"Upon the borders of this fountain, which displayed such wild and sublime magnificence, Virginia delighted to repose herself.

"Often she took her seat beneath the shade of cocoas, and there she led her goats to pasture; while with the milk which they yielded she prepared cheeses, she delighted to see them browse on the steep sides of the rock, and eat the maiden-hair which hung suspended from its sides as from a pedestal.

"Paul having remarked that this was a favorite spot with Virginia, brought from the forest a variety of birds' nests, and placed them in the cliffs of the rocks.

"The old birds, by natural instinct, followed their young, and thus was a new colony established.

"At stated times, Virginia distributed among them rice, maize, and millet.

"On her approach, the whistling blackbird, the amadavid bird, the note of which is so sweet, the black-frigate bird, the cardinal with its flame colored plumage, forsook their retreats; the paraquet, of a beautiful emerald green, came down from the surrounding palm-fans; the partridges ran along upon the grass, and like a brood of chickens, advanced to meet her.

"The sight of their sports, their repasts, and their harmless loves, gratified both the young people extremely.

"Amiable children, thus innocently passed your early days; the lapse of time was marked only by repeated acts of benevolence.

"How often, on this very spot, have your mothers folding you in their arms, returned their grateful thanks to Heaven for the consolation prepared for their declining years by your unfolding virtues, while they at present rejoiced to see you enter life under such happy auspices!

"How repeatedly under the shade of these rocks have I partaken of your rural repasts, which had cost no animal its life!

"Gourds, filled with milk, newly laid eggs, rice cakes upon plantain leaves, baskets of mangoes, oranges, dates, pomegranates, and pine-apples, furnished the most wholesome food, the finest colors, and the most refreshing and delicious juices.

"Their conversation was as innocent as their repasts; it frequently turned upon the labors of the day, and Paul formed plans of the morrow.

"He was continually devising some fresh accommodation for the little society; in one place he thought he could smooth the paths, in another, the family had no comfortable seat; there the young arbors did not afford sufficient shade, and another spot would please Virginia better.

"When the rainy season came on, the two families met in one of the cottages, and employed their time in making mats of a sort of grass and baskets of bamboo.

The walls were ornamented with rakes, spades, and hatchets, ranged in the most perfect order; next to these implements of labor were placed the productions of their ground, sacks of rice, sheaves of corn, and baskets of the plantain fruit.

"With plenty is generally combined a degree of luxury, and Virginia, from the instructions of her mother and Margaret, prepared sherbet and cordials, from the sugar cane, the orange, and the citron.

"These families took their last repast together by the light of a lamp; after which, before they separated for the night, Madame de la Tour, or Margaret, recounted tales of travelers who had been lost during the night in some of the forests of Europe, many of which are infested with desperate banditti; or told the melancholy history of some vessel shipwrecked by the tempest, on some desert isle.

"The feelings of the children were much affected by these recitals; they earnestly supplicated Heaven that the joy might one day be theirs of showing hospitality to such unfortunate persons.

"At length, when the hour of retirement arrived, the two families separated, impatient to meet in the morning.

"Sometimes they were hushed to rest by the beating

rains, which fell in torrents on the roofs of the cottages, and sometimes the hollow winds brought to their ears the distant murmurings of the waves.

"The idea of danger at a distance from them increased their thankfulness to God for their own personal safety.

"At times, Madame de la Tour read aloud some affecting history taken from the Old or New Testament.

"These sacred books gave rise to but little reasoning among her auditors, for their theology, like that of nature, consisted of sentiment, and their morality, like that of the gospel, of action.

"They had no days particularly marked for pleasure, none devoted to sadness; to them every day was a holiday, and they were constantly surrounded with a temple in which they adored an infinite Intelligence, as the friend of the human race.

"This feeling of confidence in his protection filled their minds with serenity; they felt consolation for the past, strength to bear their present trials, and hope for the future.

"Thus these females, compelled to quit society, and return to a state of nature, had developed in their own minds and in those of their children, those sympathies which are natural to the mind of man, and form the strongest support amidst the adversities of life.

"But the best regulated minds will sometimes be subject to a cloud; so it happened here occasionally: but when any member of the family became a prey to gloomy thoughts, the others exerted all their powers to remove them.

"Margaret had recourse to her natural gaiety; Madame de la Tour employed the arguments of religion, Virginia lavished her tender caresses, Paul his cordial and engaging frankness.

"Nor were Mary and Domingo behind the rest; they hastened to offer their assistance, and to weep with those who wept. Thus do weak plants, by uniting together, resist the utmost violence of the tempest.

"While the weather permitted, they regularly attended the church of the Shaddock-Grove, the steeple of which rises in the middle of the plain below.

"They frequently met there with the wealthy inhabitants of the island, who were anxious to form an acquaintance with families of whose simplicity they had heard so much, and often invited them to join parties of pleasure. But Madame de la Tour always respectfully declined their solicitations, under the persuasion that the only motive which impels the rich to seek a connection with the poor, is, that they may procure for themselves flatterers, in which character these ladies were far too independent ever to think of appearing.

"They avoided, with equal care, an acquaintance with the lower class of the inhabitants, whom they considered as commonly ignorant and ill-natured; by some they were looked upon as timid, by others proud, but their reserve was accompanied by so much urbanity and good nature, especially towards the wretched, that they soon acquired the respect of the rich, and the confidence of the poor.

"When service was over, there were commonly some persons waiting to request a kind office at their hands: sometimes the miserable sought their advice; at others, a child, with its eyes streaming with tears, requested them to visit its sick mother.

"They always provided themselves with simple medicines, as remedies for the more common disorders of the island, and these were rendered doubly valuable by the soothing manner in which they were presented.

But they chiefly endeavored to banish the disorders of the mind, which, in solitude, combined with the infirmities of a weakened frame, are so hard to bear.

"Madame de la Tour spoke to them so familiarly, and so confidently of the Divinity, that the invalid, while listening to her voice, believed him present.

"Often has Virginia returned home, having her benevo-

lent heart filled with pleasure, and her eyes overflowing with tears, from a visit of charity.

"After these, they sometimes, for the sake of lengthening their walk, came along by the sloping mountain until they reached my cottage, where they partook of dinner.

"On these occasions I produced some wine, which was valuable from its age; it served to heighten the gaiety of our repast, which we generally took on the banks of the little river which flows near my dwelling, by combining with the fruits of India the cordial beverage of Europe.

"Sometimes we appointed a meeting upon the seashore, or at the confluence of the little rivers, which might with propriety, perhaps, be termed brooks.

"To these spots we brought from our gardens such vegetables as we could easily carry, which, added to the provisions furnished by the sea, afforded us a plentiful and wholesome meal.

"We obtained from the beach, crabs, oysters, and a variety of other shell fish.

"On the steepest declivities, and the most dangerous parts of the cliffs, we have frequently enjoyed the most tranquil pleasures; we have listened to the splashing noise of the mountain billows breaking beneath our feet, while seated on a rock, under a canopy, formed by the velvet sunflower.

"Paul, who was an excellent swimmer, advanced towards the waves, then, when they approached, he swam back again to the shore.

"But Virginia was much alarmed when she saw him struggling with the breakers, and for her sake begged him to desist from such dangerous sports.

"After our repasts, the young people amused us with songs and dances.

"Virginia sung pastorals, which treated of the happiness to be found in rural life, and the folly, as well as misery, of those who for the sake of gain, ventured upon the stormy ocean, rather than cultivate the earth, and enjoy its productions.

"Sometimes Paul performed with her a pantomime, after the manner of the negroes.

"Pantomime is known to all nations; it is the natural language of man, and is so expressive, that the children of Europeans soon learn it from the natives.

"Virginia recollected, among the histories which her mother had related, some of the most affecting and best adapted for representation; the principal circumstances of which she performed with elegant simplicity.

"Sometimes she would appear on the green sward, at the sound of Domingo's tam-tam, and bearing upon her head a pitcher, which she timidly attempted to fill at a spring in the neighborhood.

"Mary and Domingo, who personated the shepherds of Midian, approached, and rudely repelled her, upon which Paul indignantly flew to assist, drove away the shepherds, and filling her pitcher, placed it on her head, crowning her at the same time with a chaplet of the Madagascar periwinkle, the red flowers of which served to heighten the delicacy of her skin.

"I then joined their sports, and assuming the part of Raguel, bestowed upon Paul my daughter Zephora in marriage.

"At other times she represented the history of the unhappy Ruth, who, upon returning poor and widowed to her native land, found herself among strangers.

"Domingo and Mary personated the reapers; Virginia as Ruth, followed them, and appeared to glean in their track; Paul advanced, and interrogated her with all the gravity of a patriarch; she timidly, and with a faltering voice, replied to his inquiries.

"Soon, moved with pity by the modesty and misfortunes of Ruth, he granted her an asylum, where she would meet with a hospitable welcome, and filled her lap with corn.

"He then led her to the place where we were sitting, as before the old men of the city, and informed us that he in-

tended to take her in marriage, notwithstanding her poverty.

"This scene, which recalled to Madame de la Tour the destitute state in which she had been left by her family, her early widowhood, the consolations she had met with from the friendship of Margaret, and the delightful anticipations of a happy union between the two children, overpowered her; she could not refrain from weeping, and the sympathetic feelings of her companions led them to join their tears with hers—but they were tears of mingled joy and sorrow.

"The simplicity with which these dramas were performed, gave them such an air of reality, that I have frequently almost fancied myself transported to the plains of Syria or Palestine.

"Nor did we want for scenery, lights, or orchestra, to suit the representation.

"We commonly contrived to place the scene in an opening of the forest, where we sat in an alcove, formed by the thick foliage of the trees, which sheltered us from the heat of the sun at noon, but when he descended the horizon, his rays diverged among the trees, and appearing like long streams of light in the forest, produced an effect truly sublime.

"At times, the whole of its disc was seen at one end of an avenue, and completely illumined the grove.

"The brilliant beams shining from below, through the thick foliage of the trees, made them glow with a luster which might rival the topaz or the emerald; their brown mossy trunks appeared like columns of bronze.

"So much was the scene altered by the peculiar position of the sun at these times, that the birds, who had fled to the silent shades to seek their nightly repose, fancied they saw another day commencing, and hailed its dawn with their cheerful songs.

"We often continued these rural entertainments until overtaken by night; but in this island, the purity of the air, and the mildness of the climate, precluded the possibility of danger from sleeping in the woods; nor was our rest likely to be molested by robbers, who were at that time unknown here, and upon our return the following day to our cabins, we found them in precisely the same condition as we had left them.

"In this insulated spot, undistinguished by commerce, so much simplicity and good faith prevailed, that a stronger fastening than a latch was unheard of, and a lock excited the astonishment of the natives.

"But although these families did not devote any fixed days in the year as days of fasting, or as festivals, there were days which to Paul and Virginia were days of festivity; these were the birth days of their mothers.

"On the evening preceding either of these, Virginia did not fail to prepare cakes of wheaten flour, which she baked and distributed to all the poor white families in the island, who were unable to obtain European bread.

"These unfortunate persons lived a truly unhappy life; for not having the resources possessed by the blacks, they were reduced to subsist on maize, in the middle of the woods, and were destitute of both the insensibility which accompanies slavery, and the fortitude acquired from education, either of which would have enabled them better to support their hard fate.

"These cakes were the only presents which Virginia had it in her power to make; but she gave them with a grace that stamped a value upon them far beyond their intrinsic worth.

"Paul was himself her almoner, and when he carried these presents, he engaged the recipients to come and pass the following day at the cottage of Madame de la Tour or Margaret.

"Pursuant to his invitation, I have seen a family consisting, perhaps, of the wretched mother, worn down with care and fatigue, accompanied by three or four children, pale, squalid, and so timid that they could scarcely venture to raise their eyes.

"This bashfulness Virginia quickly removed: she served them with refreshments, of which she did not fail to enhance the value, by mentioning any circumstance, which, in her opinion would have that effect.

"This liquor," said she, "was prepared by Margaret, that by my mother; this fruit my brother gathered from the top of a tree."

"She would get Paul to set them to dance, and would not leave them until she had beheld them contented and happy."

"She wished to diffuse among all around the happiness she enjoyed in the bosom of her family."

"How truly do we promote our own happiness," she would say, "by attending to that of others."

"When these visitors returned to their habitations, she presented them with anything with which they had seemed pleased, and pressed them to accept it, on account of its novelty or singularity, rather than wound their feelings with the idea of poverty."

"If she perceived their garments torn, she chose, with the permission of her mother, some of her own, and employed Paul to go secretly and deposit them at the door of the hut: thus she followed the example of the Divinity, by concealing the benefactor, but dispensing the benefit."

"Ye inhabitants of Europe, whose minds, even from infancy, are filled with prejudices, which are incompatible with happiness, you can have no idea of the intelligence and felicity bestowed by nature; your souls circumscribed within the narrow sphere of human knowledge, soon goes the round of artificial enjoyments, but the pleasures of nature are inexhaustible."

"Paul and Virginia possessed neither almanac, clock, nor volumes of history, chronology, or philosophy."

"The epochs of their lives were regulated by those of nature; the shadows of the trees were their guide for the hour of the day; the period of their fruit, or flowers, for the seasons, and the number of their harvests, for the date of the year."

"These soft images gave an inexpressible charm to their conversation."

"The time for dinner is arrived," said Virginia; "the shadows of the plantain trees are at their roots." "The night approaches, the leaves of the tamarinds are closed."

"When will you visit us?" asked some of her young companions in the neighborhood.

"At the time of the sugarcanes," replied Virginia.

"That will increase the pleasure of your visit," answered her young friends. If her age, or that of her brother, was inquired, she would reply, "My brother is the age of the great cocoa tree of the fountain, and I am as old as the small one. The mangoes have yielded fruit twelve times, and the orange trees have flowered twenty-four times since I was born."

"Their lives, like those of the fauns and dryads, seemed linked to the trees; they knew no other epochs in history than the lives of their mothers; their only chronology was that of their orchards, and all their philosophy centered in the attempt to do good, and in resignation to the will of Heaven."

"And after all, what occasion was there that these children should have been educated according to European fashion? Their ignorance increased their felicity."

"They never passed a day without acquiring some fresh knowledge; yes, I may say knowledge, for they understood nature, and if they had adopted a few errors, of what consequence was that, for to the innocent and pure mind, they cannot be dangerous."

"Thus, then, they grew up children of nature; no cares wrinkled their foreheads, no intemperance corrupted their blood, no ill regulated passion depraved their hearts; their souls were engrossed by love, innocence, and piety, and these intellectual graces displayed themselves in their countenances, their attitudes and their motions."

"In the morning of life, they enjoyed all its blooming freshness, and we might almost have fancied we beheld in

them our first parents in the garden of Eden, who, when coming from the hand of God, approached, and conversed together like brother and sister."

"Virginia, like Eve, was gentle, modest and confiding, and Paul, like Adam, united the figure of manhood with the innocence of a child."

"When alone with Virginia, he used frequently to say to her, upon his return from labor, 'When I am tired, the sight of you, my beloved sister, refreshes me. When I am at the summit of the mountain, if I perceive you in the vale below, you seem to me in the midst of our orchard like a fragrant rose-bud.'

"In going towards home, the partridge, when it runs to its young, steps less lightly, and appears less beautiful than you do."

"When the trees intercept my view, I need not to behold you to know where you are; I know not what, but there is something of you remains behind, in the air through which you have passed, and even the grass where you have sat, retains an impression of you."

"When I approach you, my senses are all delight. The azure of heaven loses its charms, when compared with the blue of your eyes: the sound of your voice excels in sweetness the note of the amadavid bird."

"If my finger touches you, a thrill of pleasure over-spreads my whole soul. Have you forgotten the day when we crossed the great stones of the river of the Three Peaks? I was ready to sink before we reached the bank, but no sooner had I taken you in my arms, than I acquired fresh strength."

"What is the charm by which you have so enchanted me? It cannot be your wisdom; our mothers possess more than either of us."

"Is it your caresses?—that cannot be; our mothers embrace me oftener than you do. It must be your goodness. Never will that day be erased from my memory, when you walked barefoot to the Black River, to request pardon for a poor slave."

"Here, my beloved, accept this flowering branch of the orange tree, I cut it for you in the forest."

"Refresh yourself with this honey-comb, which I found at the top of the rocks; but lean first upon my bosom, and I shall be refreshed."

Virginia then answered:

"Oh, my dear brother, I experience less joy from the rays of the sun shining on the top of the mountains, than from your presence."

"I feel the warmest affection for my mother and for yours; but when they call you their son, my brother, I love them a thousand times more."

"The caresses which they lavish upon you, give me more pleasure than those I receive myself."

"You ask me, why do you love me?"

"But is it not natural, that creatures brought up together should love each other?"

"Look at the birds around us; those which have been reared together, love as we do."

"Hark! how they call to each other from tree to tree. So when you play your flute at the top of the mountain, and the echoes bring the sound to my ear, as I am in the valley, I repeat the words of the airs you play."

"But you are especially dear to me, since the day when you were willing to have fought with the master of the poor slave for my sake."

"How often have I repeated to myself, how good a heart my brother possesses! but for him I should have died of terror."

"Every day I have prayed to God to preserve our mothers; I pray for you, and for our faithful servants; but my devotion is redoubled when I utter your name; so earnestly do I pray to God that no danger may hurt you."

"Why do you go to such a distance to seek fruit and flowers for me?"

"Have we not plenty in our gardens?"

"How tired you appear; you are quite in a perspiration;"

and with her white handkerchief she would wipe the drops that stood upon his face.

"For a considerable space of time Virginia had been agitated by new sensations, entirely different from what she had before felt.

"The luster had forsaken her fine blue eyes, her cheeks had lost their color, and a universal langour had diffused itself over her frame.

"No longer was the image of peace engraven on her forehead, and the sweet smile had left her lips.

"Suddenly she became gay without joy, and melancholy without vexation.

"Her innocent sports, her gentle labors, and the society of her beloved family, no longer had charms for her.

"She wandered along the plantation, seeking everywhere that rest which she could not obtain.

"Sometimes, at the approach of Paul, she advanced playfully towards him; and instead of accosting him as usual, she retreated in hasty confusion; a blush reddened her pale cheeks, and her eyes no longer dared meet those of her brother.

"Paul said to her, 'Verdure covers the rocks; the birds sing to welcome you when they see you; all is gay which surrounds you, yourself only is unhappy.'

"He would endeavor to sooth her by his caresses; but, turning away from him, she would fly trembling to her mother.

"Her heart was too much agitated by the embraces of her brother, who was quite at a loss to understand the meaning of these strange emotions.

"But this was not the only evil which the families were destined to suffer at this time.

"One of those sultry summers which sometimes desolate tropical climates, now ravaged the island.

"It was near the end of December, when the sun in Capricorn darts his vertical rays over the Isle of France, during the space of three weeks.

"The south-east wind, which prevails nearly the whole year, no longer blew.

"From the roads arose vast clouds of dust, which hung suspended in mid-air; the ground opened into great chasms; vegetation was burnt up; hot vapors issued from the sides of the mountains, and their rivulets mostly dried away; fiery exhalations arose out of the plains, and, at the setting sun, seemed like a dreadful conflagration; even night brought no relief to the heated atmosphere.

"The moon seemed as if made of blood; and through the misty horizon behind which it rose, it appeared of extraordinary size.

"The panting cattle, on the declivities of the hills, endeavored in vain to find relief, and made the mountains re-echo with their lowings.

"Even the poor Caffre who had the charge of them, prostrated himself on the ground in search of coolness.

"But every place had been alike subject to the influence of a scorching sun, and the stifling air was agitated only by the fluttering of the insects, who sought to allay their thirst with the blood of man or beast.

"It was on one of these dreadful nights that Virginia, feeling the symptoms of her disorder increase, arose, restless and unhappy; she walked about, she sat down, she again went to bed, but could find in no position either slumber or repose. Tired and vexed, she bent her steps towards the fountain, which she perceived by the light of the moon, and stood gazing on its waters, which, notwithstanding the intense heat, still flowed in silver threads down the brown flanks of the rocks.

"She plunged into the basin; her spirits at first revived from its coolness, and her mind was filled with a thousand soft remembrances.

"She recollected that it was in that very spot that her mother and Margaret had delighted to bathe her and Paul, and that Paul, afterwards reserving that bath for her use alone, had smoothed a bottom for it, and sown the border with aromatic herbs.

"She saw reflected in the clear water, upon her naked arms and bosom, the two cocoa trees which had been planted at the births of Paul and herself. Her head, as she saw it in the stream, appeared decorated with their green branches and young fruit.

"She reflected on the tender friendship of Paul, which was to her sweeter than the odors of the flowers, purer than water of the fountain, stronger than the twining branches, and drew a sigh.

"When she reflected upon the hour of the night, and the lonely situation in which she was, her imagination became heated; she quickly flew from these dangerous shades, and left the waters, which she fancied hotter than the beams of the sun, and hastened to hide her feelings in the bosom of her mother.

"Often did she imagine that she had found courage to disclose her sufferings, and pressed her mother's hand; but when she attempted to pronounce the name of Paul, her agitation increased, and she had not the power of uttering a word; and leaning on her mother's bosom, could only bathe it with her tears.

"Madame de la Tour guessed the source of her daughter's agitation, but did not think it expedient to mention the subject to her.

"My dear child,' said she, 'offer up your prayers to God, who disposes at his will, life, health, and peace. His motive in sending these trials upon you now, is, that he may recompense you hereafter. Remember that this earth is only a state of trial.'

"About this time, immense vapors were drawn from the ocean by the intense heat, covering the whole island, as a vast parasol, and gathering around the summits of the mountains, from the peaks of which issued, occasionally, long flashes of fire. They were followed by the most awful thunder, which re-echoed through the trees of the forest, and made the plains and valleys resound with the noise, while the rain fell in torrents from the skies; foaming cataracts rolled down the sides of the mountain, the valley was inundated, the plot of the ground on which the cottage was built, was insulated, and the entrance of the valley was like a flood gate, out of which rushed precipitately the waters; earth, trees, and rocks, were all mingled in one scene of confusion.

"The frightened family assembled in the cottage of Madame de la Tour, and addressed their fervent prayers to God.

"The roof appeared ready to give way from the force of the winds, and so frequent and vivid were the flashes of lightning, that notwithstanding the doors and windows of the cottage were securely fastened, every object might be distinctly seen through the joints of the beams. The intrepid Paul, braving the fury of the tempest, went accompanied by Domingo, from cottage to cottage, in one place setting a buttress to support a part which seemed likely to fall, in another driving in a stake, and occasionally returning to tranquilize the fears of the family, by assuring them that the storm would shortly pass away. This was indeed the case, for at the approach of evening, the rains ceased, the south trade winds again blew, the tempestuous clouds sunk in the north-east and the setting sun appeared in the horizon.

"As soon as it was possible to leave home, Virginia wished to visit the spot called her 'Repose.' Paul timidly drew near, and offered her his arm; she smiled, and accepted this support, and thus they left the cottage together.

"The air was clear and pleasant; white vapors exhaled from the ridges of the mountain, which was in some places followed by the torrents which had now dried up.

"The floods had worn hollows in the garden, which entirely spoiled it; the roots of the fruit trees were laid bare and the chain of meadow land was covered with vast heaps of sand, which had entirely choked up Virginia's bath.

"The two cocoa trees were, notwithstanding, still upright, and retained their beauty; but they no longer stood

amidst a carpet of turf, nor were they the resort of the feathered race, excepting a few amadavid birds, who lamented in the most melancholy strains, the loss of their offspring.

"Almost overcome with the sight of this general desolation of the places most dear to her, Virginia said to Paul:

"You sought birds from the mountains, and brought them hither; they are all killed by the hurricane; you labored to plant the garden, it is all laid waste; everything here below is mutable—heaven alone is immutable."

"Oh," exclaimed Paul, "why cannot I give you something which belongs to heaven? but I, alas! possess nothing even here on earth."

Virginia replied, her cheeks suffused with blushes:

"You have a picture of St. Paul."

"She had no sooner uttered these words, than he left her, and flew to his mother's cottage, in search of the picture.

"It was a small miniature, representing Paul the hermit, which Margaret, who was very devout, had when a girl constantly worn; but when she became a mother, she gave this precious treasure to her beloved infant.

"She even fancied, that having, for some months previous to his birth, been secluded from the world, and passing whole days in looking upon the portrait of this sainted hermit, the features of her babe bore a strong resemblance to it, and on this account she had determined to give him the name of Paul, and by so doing, to put him under the protection of a saint, who, like herself, had first been deceived, and then forsaken by the world.

"Upon receiving from the hands of Paul this miniature, Virginia said, with strong emotion, 'My dearest brother, while I live, this never shall be out of my possession; never will I, never can I forget that you have given me the only article which you possess in this world.' Paul, charmed with this unexpected return of tenderness and familiarity, attempted to embrace her, but she lightly tripped from him, and almost with the swiftness of a bird, returned to the cottage, leaving Paul disconsolate and thunderstruck at her conduct.

"When Madame de la Tour and Margaret were together one day shortly after this occurrence, the latter said:

"Why do we not unite our children in marriage? They are tenderly attached to each other, although my son is not aware of the strength of their mutual passion. 'When he shall have discovered this, it will be too late for us to interfere, everything then is to be feared.'"

Madame de la Tour replied:

"They are yet very young, and they are very poor. How should we be grieved, if Virginia brought into the world miserable children, whom she could not rear! As for our servants, Domingo is almost past labor; Mary is in years, and, my dear friend, fifteen years spent in this hot climate, together with ceaseless anxiety, have much enervated and undermined my health. Our sole dependence is on Paul. Let us then defer the proposed marriage until his constitution shall be formed, and he can support us by his labor. You well know, that we have a bare sufficiency for our daily exigencies; but if Paul were to go for a short time to the Indies, he would, by commerce, acquire property enough to purchase a slave; and on his return he shall be united to Virginia, for no one on earth would make her so happy. We will ask the opinion of our neighbor upon this point."

"These ladies did accordingly request my opinion. I replied:

"The Indian seas are not dangerous, and by selecting a favorable season, the voyage may be performed in six weeks. Paul shall take a small venture, which can be easily collected for him in my neighborhood, where he has many friends. He might take some raw cotton, which, for want of mills to dress it, is useless to us; some ebony, which we use as firewood, and some resin, which is abundant in our woods; all these things are to us of small value, but will sell for a considerable price in the Indies."

"I undertook the task of obtaining permission of Mon-

sieur de la Bourdonnais for the voyage, but thought it better, previously to this step, to inform Paul of our plan.

"How great was my astonishment, when, with a good sense far above his years, he replied, 'Why do you wish that I should quit my native isle and beloved family, in the precarious pursuit of fortune? Is it possible to engage in any speculation which will prove more advantageous than the cultivation of our ground, which yields fifty or a hundred for one? If you are desirous that I should engage in trade, how can I do it better than by carrying our superfluities to Port Louis? This will be far better than wandering to the Indies. You urge that Domingo is old, but I am young, and my strength increases daily. Some accident might happen during my absence; above all, Virginia, who is already a sufferer, might be worse. No, my friend, I never can resolve to quit them!'

"This reply gave me much pain, for I well knew the state in which Virginia was, and Madame de la Tour had informed me of her desire to separate the two young people for a short time, but I dared not suggest this to Paul.

"During these deliberations, a vessel arrived from France, and brought a letter to Madame de la Tour, from her aunt.

"The fear of death, which she beheld approaching with hasty strides, had produced that sympathy for her unhappy niece, which representations and entreaties had failed to accomplish: without a motive of this sort, hearts hard like hers, would never be moved.

"She was just recovering from a dangerous disorder, reduced in strength, and incurable from age. She wrote to request her niece to return to France, or, if she felt herself too much enfeebled to undertake so long a voyage, she besought her to send Virginia, whom she would educate, and procure for her a splendid alliance, leaving her the whole property of which she was possessed, and she expressly mentioned, that if her wishes were not complied with, she should withhold all future favors.

"The perusal of this letter threw the whole family into the deepest grief. Domingo and Mary wept aloud.

"Paul stood motionless with astonishment, and seemed ready to burst with indignation.

"Virginia fixed her trembling eyes upon her mother, but dared not utter a word. The first person who spoke, was Margaret, who said to Madame de la Tour, 'And can you think of quitting us?' 'No,' replied Madame de la Tour, 'no, my beloved friend, my dear children, I can never quit you! With you have I lived, with you will I die. The only happiness I have tasted has sprung from your friendship. Past misfortunes have indeed destroyed my health; my heart, nearly broken by the cruelty of unfeeling relations, and the irreparable loss of a beloved husband, has been cheered and soothed beneath these humble huts, and in this isle has found more consolation than it could have experienced from all the wealth of my family in my native country.'

"These assurances filled the minds of all present with delight.

"Paul pressed the hand of Madame de la Tour, exclaiming, 'We will not part. I will not go to the Indies. We will all labor for your support, my dear mother, and with us you shall never feel any want.'

"Of the whole family, the person who betrayed the least emotion, but felt the most, was Virginia.

"During the rest of the day she resumed her former gentleness and gaiety, and the return of her tranquillity completed the joy of the family.

"The following morning, while they were offering up their sacrifice of praise, which they usually did at sunrise, previous to their breakfast, Domingo brought news that a gentleman was approaching the plantation on horseback, attended by two slaves.

"It proved to be M. de la Bourdonnais.

"Upon entering the cottage he found the family at breakfast.

"Virginia had prepared, according to the custom of the

country, rice and coffee boiled with spring water, to which were added hot yams and young fresh cocoas.

"They had no table linen, but its place was supplied by leaves of the plantain tree, and the utensils they made use of were calabassia shells, split.

"The governor was much astonished by the poverty exhibited in the dwelling.

"He addressed Madame de la Tour, and after a few remarks upon the homeliness of their accommodation, observed that although his attention was so much engrossed by public affairs, as to render it impossible for him to attend to the concerns of individuals, yet she had strong claims upon him.

"I find, madam," said he, "that you have an aunt at Paris, of high rank, and possessing great wealth. She expects that you will hasten to see her, and as the reward of your obedience, she will bestow her whole fortune upon you."

"Madame de la Tour replied that 'it was impossible, in the present state of her health for her to undertake so long a voyage.'

"If that is the case," replied M. de la Bourdonnais, "you cannot, without the greatest injustice, deprive your amiable daughter of so rich an inheritance. I must also inform you, that your aunt has taken steps to compel your return, and that I have received letters from persons in power, ordering me, if necessary, to employ my authority for that purpose; but I never make use of it, except with a view to the happiness of the inhabitants of this island, and would much rather receive your promise that you will make a voluntary sacrifice for a few years, which will be amply repaid by your daughter's establishment in the world, and your own happiness through life. Why do so many come to these islands, is it not to obtain a fortune? and would it not be much more agreeable to return and find it in your own country?"

"He then made a signal to one of his slaves, who produced a large bag of piastres.

"This," added he, "is allotted for the preparations necessary for Mademoiselle de la Tour's voyage."

"He mildly reproached Madame de la Tour for not having had recourse to him in her exigencies, but extolled her noble fortitude.

"Paul, upon this, addressed the governor, saying:

"My mother did call upon you, sir, but you received her unkindly."

"M. de la Bourdonnais asked with astonishment:

"Have you a son, madam?"

"No, sir," she replied, "this is the child of my friend; but he is equally dear to me with Virginia."

"Young man," said the governor, addressing Paul, "your experience of the world is very limited; when it is enlarged, you will know that it is the lot of persons in authority to be deceived, and they frequently, although unintentionally, bestow upon intriguing vice those gratuities which belong to modest merit."

"M. de la Bourdonnais accepted the invitation of Madame de la Tour, and placed himself at table by her.

"He breakfasted in the manner of the natives, upon coffee, mixed with rice boiled in water.

"The harmony of these amiable families, the extreme neatness which prevailed in the cottage, and the fidelity of the two servants, quite delighted him.

"I observe here," said he, "only furniture of the meanest kind, but I see serene countenances, and cheerful minds."

"Paul, quite delighted with the affability of the governor, said to him:

"I wish to be your friend, you are a good man."

"This compliment, rough as it was, pleased the governor; he took the hand of Paul, and told him that he might depend on any services which his friendship could perform.

"After breakfast he led Madame de la Tour aside, and told her that a ship would sail shortly, in which she might send her daughter, under the protection of a lady, a relation of his, and that she must not think much of being deprived

of her daughter's company for a few years, when she considered the acquisition of so large a fortune; and he added:

"Your aunt is fast approaching her end; it is the opinion of her friends that she cannot survive more than two years. Consider of it, and remember that fortune does not come every day. Consult with your friends, and I think they will all tell you to follow my advice."

"She replied, that her highest wish on earth was to see her daughter happy, and that therefore she should leave her departure for France entirely to her own inclination.

"Madame de la Tour was not sorry to find an opportunity of separating Paul and Virginia for some time, that when they met again they might have the means of greater enjoyment of each other's society.

"She then took her daughter aside and said to her:

"My child, our servants are old, Paul is very young, Margaret is fast approaching old age, and I am already infirm. If I die, what will become of you, without fortune, amidst these barren rocks? You will then stand alone, having no one to assist you, and will be obliged to drag on your miserable existence by incessant and unwearied labor. I shudder at the thought."

Virginia replied:

"God has commanded us all to labor, and I thank and bless Him daily that you have instructed me how to work. Hitherto He has been present with us, and I am sure He will never forsake us. His watchful providence is ever over the unfortunate; you have told me this frequently, my beloved mother. I cannot quit you."

"Madame de la Tour replied with emotion:

"I have no other motive than your happiness, and of marrying you at some future time to Paul, who is not your brother. Think therefore that his fortune depends on you. A young girl who feels the tie of love, thinks every one is ignorant of it. She throws over her eyes the same veil with which her heart is covered; but when it is raised by the hand of an affectionate friend, then the secret inquietudes break their barrier, and the sweet enjoyment of confidence succeeds that reserve and mystery with which she was before surrounded."

"Virginia, greatly moved by this fresh act of kindness in her mother, told her of the combats she had endured, and of which no one had been witness but God; and she saw the goodness of Providence in the approval of a beloved mother, who was ever ready to direct by her advice; and that now, strengthened by her counsels, her determination was to remain with her, without uneasiness for the present, or fear for the time to come.

"Madame de la Tour seeing that this conference had produced an effect quite opposite to that which she had wished or hoped for, said to her, 'My affectionate child, I do not wish to influence your mind; but take time for reflection, and do not let Paul know your sentiments.'

"Madame de la Tour and Virginia being alone in the evening, the confessor, an ecclesiastic and missionary for the island, came to converse with them. He was sent by the governor.

"My children," said he, as he entered. "God be praised! you now have riches; you have the means of conferring happiness on the poor and indigent. I know that Monsieur de la Bourdonnais has spoken to you on the subject, and what your reply was. Dear madame, your state of health will oblige you to remain here, but you, Virginia, can find no reason for staying. We must obey the commands of Providence, and the mandates of our aged relations, although they appear harsh and disagreeable. It is a sacrifice, but it is the will of God. He sacrificed Himself for us, and we in return ought to sacrifice ourselves for the good of our family. You will be amply repaid for your visit to France. Do you not agree to it, my young lady?"

"Virginia, with downcast eyes, replied, 'If it be the will of God, I must obey it; I will not oppose it; and as she said this, the tears fell from her eyes.'

"The missionary left them, and went to the governor, to tell him what had passed.

"Nevertheless, Madame de la Tour sent to me to beg my advice relative to the departure of Virginia.

"I thought it better for her to remain here, as I hold it a general sentiment, that we ought rather to prefer the pleasures of nature, to the splendid allurements of fortune; and that we ought not to seek abroad those comforts which we can more readily find at home. That is my general maxim.

"But of what weight will my humble advice be, when counterbalanced by the attraction of riches, and my natural reasoning against an authority which Madame de la Tour holds so sacred?

"This lady had fully made up her mind from the advice of the confessor, and only consulted me, without any intention of regarding my opinion.

"Margaret, now sensible of the advantages her son would reap, made no farther objection to it.

"Paul, not knowing what had passed, and witnessing so much secret conversation between Madame de la Tour and Virginia, imagined that they were conspiring against his peace and happiness, and gave himself up to a profound melancholy.

In the meantime, it was confidently talked of in the isle, that fortune had visited the inhabitants of the valley; and they saw merchants of all kinds flocking around their habitations, and spreading their splendid merchandise in these wretched huts.

"They showed them India stuff, Gondelore dimity, the fine and beautiful Pellicate and Mussalapatum handkerchiefs, the clear and elegant Decca muslins, so richly embroidered, both plain and striped, gorgeous Chinese silks, satin damasks of various hues, rose-colored taffetas, satins, and pekings of every shade, gauze of Tonquin, and nankeens and calico from Madagascar.

"Madame de la Tour wished her daughter to buy what she pleased.

"She took particular care lest being unacquainted with the prices and quality of such merchandise, she might be deceived; and Virginia chose whatever she thought would give pleasure to her mother, Margaret, or Paul.

"This," said she, "will make excellent furniture, and that shall be for Mary and Domingo's use."

"Her purse being exhausted, and her wants not satisfied, she was obliged to accept again a part of what she had distributed to the family.

"Paul witnessed all these gifts with much emotion, as the prelude to Virginia's departure.

"A few days after he came to me, and with a sorrowful heart, said:

"My sister is going to leave me; she is even preparing for her voyage to France. Call on us, I pray you, and exert your influence over her mother and mine, to endeavor to dissuade them from it."

"I listened to the solicitations of Paul, although I was sure that my persuasions would be of no avail.

"Virginia had always appeared beautiful, when dressed in her Bengalese blue cloth, but how was her beauty heightened, when arrayed in the elegant attirements of the ladies of that country.

"She wore a white muslin, lined with rose-colored taffetas, and her corset showed her elegant and slender shape to the most advantage; and the effect of her simple head dress was much improved by the careless negligence with which her light auburn tresses were interwoven with it.

"Her fine blue eyes spoke the melancholy she felt, and her flushed cheek and hurried tone of voice at once expressed the feelings of her agitated heart.

"The contrast that was formed by her grave and pensive look, and the gay and splendid attire with which she was habited, rendered her more interesting; and it was impossible either to hear or see her without deeply sympathizing with her.

Paul's sorrow increased daily.

"Margaret, seeing the state of her son, said to him:

"My dear Paul, why do you nourish such unstable thoughts? It will only render your disappointment the more keen. I will no longer delay to disclose to you the secret of your life, and of mine. Madame de la Tour belongs to a high and noble family; whilst you, my dear son, are only the offspring of a poor peasant, and what is worse, you are a natural child."

"The word natural resounded in the ears of Paul.

"He had no conception of its import; he asked his mother the meaning of it, to which she replied:

"You have no legitimate father. When I was young, I suffered myself to be led away by love, and to commit that folly of which you are the offspring. Through my weakness you stand solitary, with no other relative than myself. Unhappy boy! by my fault I have deprived you of the support of a father's family, and by my flight from home I have deprived you of the protection of a mother's friends! As she said this, she shed a flood of tears.

"But Paul exclaimed as he affectionately took her hand:

"My dearest mother, since I have none other than you in this world to care for me, how much more ought I to love you! But what is the secret you have revealed to me! I now see why Mademoiselle de la Tour has for these last two months kept herself so distant. Ah! I see with what contempt she looks upon me."

"Supper time having arrived, we seated ourselves at the table, but with little appetite.

"Our minds being occupied with different sensations, we felt but little inclination to eat, and much to converse.

"Virginia leaving the room first, went and placed herself where we now are; Paul shortly followed, and seated himself beside her; and for some time they maintained a profound silence.

"It was one of those clear and beautiful nights which are so calm and refreshing, after the scorching rays of a tropical sun, and to which no pencil can do justice.

"The moon appeared in the center of the firmament, surrounded by light and silvery clouds.

"She enlightened the mountains, and gave a tint of silvery green to the peaks.

"All was silent, save the buzz of insects on the grass, and the gentle murmuring of the birds, who, though hid in their nests, rejoiced at the clearness and tranquillity of the night, and were heard from the woods, the valleys, and the lofty rocks; the ocean reflected the brilliant moon and those lucid orbs, the stars.

"Virginia contemplated the vast and dreary ocean; which was only discernible by the lights in the fishing boats.

"She perceived something at the entrance of the harbor, which proved to be the watch-light and body of the ship in which she was about to depart, and which only lay at anchor, waiting for a fair wind to set sail.

"Affected at this sight, she turned her head aside, lest Paul should see her agitation.

"Madame de la Tour, Margaret, and myself, were seated at some distance, under the shade of a plantain tree, and through the silence of the night we distinctly heard their conversation, which I shall ever remember.

"Paul said to her, 'Dear Virginia, they say you are to leave us in three days. Do you not fear to expose yourself to the dangers of the sea, for which you have always felt so great an antipathy?'

"I must go," replied, Virginia; 'I must obey my parents; it is my duty.'

"You will leave us then," answered Paul, 'for a distant relation, whom you do not know!'

"Alas!" said Virginia, 'I would most willingly have spent my whole life here; but my mother wishes otherwise. My confessor tells me it is the will of God that I should leave my peaceful home, and that this life is a scene of trials. Oh, this is indeed a severe one to me!'

"What," replied Paul, 'can you bring forward so many reasons for quitting us, and none for remaining here? Ah!'

I see there is something which is hidden from me. Riches possess the power of a loadstone. You will soon find in the new country to which you are going, one to whom you may apply the appellation 'brother,' which you once so kindly bestowed on me—you will quickly find one who will be worthy of you, both as to rank and fortune. But whither will you go to obtain greater happiness than we have enjoyed here; or what country will be dearer to you than your native isle? Where will you possess more agreeable society than in the company of those who have known and loved you from your birth? How will you exist without the caresses of a fond and affectionate mother? and what will become of her, already infirm, after being used to see you by her at the table and in the house? and who will she have to lean upon when she walks out? And what will become of my mother, my dear Virginia, for she has always loved you as her daughter? How can I console them, when they are deploring your absence? Cruel girl! I speak not for myself alone, though I know not how I can bear the thought, that when I arise in the morning, I shall not see you, and that, after the fatigues of the day, evening will not unite us; and when I look at those two palm trees, which, since our birth have stood witnesses of our mutual affection! Ah! since you seek other pleasures, and a new habitation in a foreign land, allow me to attend in the vessel which is to carry you far hence. I will strengthen your courage in the midst of storms—I will offer you consolation when any danger appears; and in France I will attend you as your slave, wherever you may please to go. To see you happy will make me so; thus you will find me always in those houses where you are most beloved and adored, ever ready to make a sacrifice for you, by dying at your feet.

"Here his feelings overpowered him, and prevented his continuing.

"We then heard Virginia with sighs and sobs say:

"Paul, it is for you that I go; it is for you, whom I have seen everywhere, almost overpowered with fatigue, supporting two infirm families. If I have listened to this proposal for accepting so large a fortune, it is only that I may in some measure, return your manifold kindnesses to us. Is this worthy of your affection? Ah! if I had to choose a brother, I should fix my choice on you, my dear Paul: you are much dearer to me than any brother. Oh, what pain has it given me to be so little with you! Strengthen me to bear with fortitude a separation from those whom I value more than my life, until it please Heaven that we shall be re-united. But I will either go or stay, live or die, just as it is the wish of my friends. Oh, unfortunate girl that I am, I could resist your caresses, but I cannot your grief!"

"When Paul heard these words, he clasped her in his arms, and pressed her to his bosom, declaring in a resolute tone, that nothing should part them—that where she went he would also go.

Madame de la Tour said to him:

"My son, if you leave us, what is to become of us?"

"He, in an agitated manner repeated the words:

"My son! my son—Oh, my mother! you wish to separate me from an affectionate sister, we, whom you have brought up together, and whom you have taught to love each other tenderly. Would you now tear her from me, and send her to Europe, that barbarous country, which refused an asylum to you, and to those cruel relatives who once discarded and abandoned you? I know what will be your reply—you will say 'She is not your sister, and you have no control over her.' She is all to me—my fortune, my family, my birth, all unite to render her my sole good. I know none but her. We have had but one habitation, one cradle, and we shall have but one grave. If she leaves this isle I must leave with her. The governor will prevent me, but he cannot hinder my throwing myself into the sea; he cannot hinder my swimming after her. Since I cannot exist here without her, I will cast myself into the water, and die before her eyes, at a distance from you. Brutal mother, unfeeling and unnatural woman! May this ocean

to which you would expose her, restore her to you no more. May the lifeless corpses of your two children float back on the waves to this stony beach, and thus fill your mind with an everlasting regret!"

"At these words I seized him in my arms, seeing that his distracted mind was overwhelmed with despair.

"Fire darted from his eyes, the perspiration ran down his burning face, and I felt his heart beat with redoubled force against his aching bosom.

"Virginia, greatly agitated, replied, 'Oh, my dear Paul, I call all our former pleasures, and everything that can bind the affection of two unfortunate beings, to witness, that if I remain here, it is only for you; and if I leave my home, I will at a future time return and be united with you. I call on those to be my witnesses who have nourished me from my infancy, and who now wish to tear me from my native isle. I swear by the heavens above, and by the sea that I am to cross, and by the air that we breathe!'

"As the warming rays of the sun softens and melts the ice from the summits of the Appennines, so the voice of the beloved object of his affection subdued his impetuous anger.

"His head sank, and a torrent of tears flowed from his eyes. His mother mingled her tears with his, still continuing to embrace him, without being able to speak.

"Madame de la Tour replied, 'This is too much for me; I cannot bear it; my mind is quite distracted! We must give up this unhappy visit. My dear friend, take my son home with you, for it is above a week since any of us have slept.'

"I then said, 'Paul, your sister shall not go. To-morrow we will speak to the governor; but now leave your family to rest and quietness, and come with me, for it is getting late; it is twelve o'clock.'

"He allowed himself to be conducted in silence; and after a wearisome night, he arose at the dawn of day, and returned home.

"But why should I any longer trespass on your time, by continuing my history? We never shall find all circumstances of human life agreeable. Human life is like the globe on which we live; while one side of it is illuminated the other is in total darkness."

"Father," cried I, "continue, I pray you, this interesting and pathetic history. Tales of happiness amuse us, but those of misfortune instruct us. What became of the unhappy Paul?"

"The first person whom Paul saw on his return home, was the negress Mary, who was mounted on the summit of a lofty rock, steadfastly watching the boundless ocean. He called out to her, as soon as he perceived her, 'Where is Virginia?' Mary, on seeing her young master, began to weep.

"Paul, in a distracted and bewildered manner, trod back his steps again, and hastened to the harbor. They there told him, that Virginia had embarked at the dawn of day, and that the wind being fair, the ship set sail immediately, and was now out of sight. He then returned home, without uttering a single word.

"Although those rocks behind us appear so perpendicular and inaccessible, you may reach their summit by the green platforms which separate them at the top, and which form so many stages by which, though through some difficult paths, you may ascend to the heights of those lofty and overhanging mountains which time has designated the Thumb.

"At the base of this cone is an esplanade covered with high trees, which is so steep and lofty that it appears like an aerial forest, surrounded by dreadful and tremendous precipices.

"The height of these rocks attract the clouds, thus supplying innumerable little rivulets, which rush into the valley beneath; from their elevated source you do not hear the noise of the waterfall.

"From this place you may observe the greatest part of

the island, her lofty precipices and majestic peaks, and among them Piterboth and the Three Peaks, and their valleys, richly wooded.

"You may also view the vast and boundless ocean, and forty leagues to the west you may see the island of Bourbon.

"It was from this place that Paul anxiously gazed on the ship that had borne away his beloved Virginia.

"He now saw it ten leagues out at sea, and it appeared to him like a black spot, tossing about among the waves.

"He remained here the chief part of the day, contemplating the loss he had sustained.

"Although now far distant from his sight, he still conceived that he saw it flitting before his eyes; and when his imagination had lost all traces of it, he despondingly sat himself down on this barren spot, which is exposed to those winds which constantly agitate the cabbage and gum trees.

"Their slow and soft murmurs resemble the tones of an organ, and inspire the soul with the deepest melancholy. It was in this place that I found the afflicted Paul, with his head reclined upon the sterile rock, and his eyes steadfastly bent upon the earth.

"I had watched him since break of day, and observed the track he took, and it was with the utmost difficulty that I could persuade him to descend these stupendous cliffs, and return to his disconsolate family. I conducted him home, and the first idea that flashed across his distracted mind, upon seeing Madame de la Tour, was to reproach her with deceiving him in the grossest manner.

"Madame de la Tour told us, that at three o'clock that morning a favorable wind had arisen, and a palanquin had been brought, and that, notwithstanding her tears, or those of Margaret, they had torn the disconsolate Virginia from the embraces of her dearest friends, distracted and half dying.

"Oh," cried Paul, "could I but have bid her farewell, I should now have been more happy and calm! Could I but have said to her, Virginia, if during the years we have spent together, I have in any instance contradicted or offended you, tell me, I implore you, and grant me your forgiveness; and since, my dearest sister, we are destined to part forever, I will bid you an eternal adieu; and though far from me, live contented and happy!"

"Seeing his mother and Madame de la Tour weeping, he said to them:

"You must now look to some other than me for consolation."

"He then, sobbing, left the house, and wandered about the plantation, as one half frantic with grief, seeking those spots which his beloved Virginia had taken most pleasure in. As he saw the bleating goats and kids, which followed him, he exclaimed:

"Alas! what is it that you look for? Do you seek her who used to feed and nourish you with her own hand?"

"He then hastened to a bower which they had named the *Repose of Virginia*, and as the little birds fluttered around, he said:

"Ah, little birds, you fly to meet her who was delighted to hear your warbling notes and tuneful songs!"

"And seeing Fidele, he exclaimed:

"Unhappy dog! you seek her whom you will not find. She is lost forever!"

"He then ascended the cliff to the place where he had conversed with her the evening before, and upon seeing the fathomless depths and rolling waves which had borne away his beloved object, he burst into a flood of tears.

"Fearing some fatal accident from his frantic mind, we kept a continual watch upon him, and in the mildest and most affectionate manner, Margaret and Madame de la Tour conjured him to return, and not to increase the infliction of the family by his despair.

"Madame de la Tour at length succeeded, by using such soothing epithets as she knew would produce the greatest

effect on him, and which would exhilarate and revive his desponding mind.

"She gave him the appellation of her son, her beloved son, for whom she had destined Virginia.

"He yielded to her entreaties, and returned home with her, and received some food.

"He seated himself at the table with us; he placed himself on a seat next to that which the companion of his youth had been used to occupy; a dream of fancy seized his mind; he thought for the time, that she whom he so dearly loved was seated by his side; he spoke to her, offered her those things which he thought would best please her, but awakening from this reverie, he began to weep.

"For some time after, he employed himself in collecting everything that had belonged to Virginia; the last flowers she had culled; a cup made from the shell of a coconut, from which she had been accustomed to drink; and as if these relics of his absent friend had been as valuable as precious gems, he kissed them with the most heartfelt satisfaction, and pressed them carefully to his bosom.

"The odoriferous perfumes of the amber are not so sweet as those things which have belonged to our tender and beloved friends.

"At length he saw that his despair only depressed the spirits of Madame de la Tour and Margaret, and that the wants of the family could only be supplied by continued industry; he therefore, with the aid of Domingo, set about cultivating the neglected garden.

"Paul, who had hitherto been as indifferent as a savage to anything that passed in the world, now expressed a wish that I would teach him to read and to write, that he might be able to carry on a correspondence with Virginia. He wished also to learn geography, that he might form a conception of the place whither she had gone; he wished to study history, that he might know the manners and customs of those people with whom she was to reside.

"Thus, as love had taught him to find delight in agriculture, and cultivate with the greatest taste the most barren and sterile land, so it now bent his mind to more refined studies.

"It is to this ardent and restless passion we owe the gradual development of arts and sciences; and it is its disappointments which teach us philosophy, and which make us bear with fortitude the crosses of this world.

"Thus has nature created love to be the connecting link between all creatures, the first spring of society and the instigator of pleasure. Paul took no delight in the study of geography, which only gave a description of the political divisions, instead of a general outline of each country.

"He found history dry and uninteresting, more particularly modern history, as it only recorded general and periodical events, bloody wars, of which he could not conceive the cause, perfidious intrigues of unprincipled and treacherous nations, inhuman and barbarous princes.

"He preferred novels to history; they treated more on the manners and customs of mankind, frequently presenting to his sight similar situations to his own.

"He was highly delighted with *Telemachus*; it gave him representations of a pastoral life, and of those passions which are inherent in the human mind.

"He took pleasure in reading those passages which most affected him, to his mother and Madame de la Tour; and notwithstanding the efforts he made, the remembrance of former pleasures would overcome him, and his eyes would be bathed in tears.

"He thought he saw in Virginia the wisdom and dignity of Antiope, with the misfortunes and tenderness of Eucharis.

"Our modern novels, so filled with licentious maxims and manners, called forth sentiments of quite a different nature from the pure heart of Paul; and when he was told that they drew a faithful picture of European manners, he trembled, lest from Virginia's residence there, her manners would become contaminated, and she might forget him.

"Indeed, more than a year and a half elapsed without

Madame de la Tour receiving any intelligence either from her aunt or her daughter. She had only heard from a stranger that Virginia had arrived safely in France.

"At length a letter arrived from her by a vessel bound to India, but which touched at Port Louis on its way thither. Although this amiable young girl had couched her letter in the most guarded terms, it was easy to discover that there was something which she wished to conceal, and not to express her unhappiness, lest it should wound the feelings of her mother.

"Her letter painted in such true and lively colors her character and mind, that it made the deepest impression on me, and I remember it word for word.

"My beloved and affectionate mamma:

"I have written several letters to you, and not having received any answers, I fear that you have never received them. I think that from the precaution I have now taken, this will arrive safe, and by this means I shall be able to carry on a correspondence with you. I have shed many tears since I left the shores of my native isle; I, who never before wept but for the misfortunes of others. On my arrival in France, my aunt questioned me as to the acquirements that I possessed, and was much surprised to find me ignorant of reading and writing. She then inquired how I had spent my time, and what I had learned: I replied the management of household affairs, and to obey the commands of my mother. She then told me that I had only received the common education of a servant. The following day she took me to a large abbey near Paris, where she placed me as a boarder. I have masters of all kinds; they instruct me, among other things, in history, geography, grammar, mathematics, and horsemanship: but I feel my inclination so weak, that I fear my advancement under them will be but slow. Oh! I feel that I am a poor proficient, with not much taste for such sciences. The kindness of my aunt does not relax in the slightest degree; she furnishes me with a constant variety of new dresses. She has given me two young women, who are dressed like fine ladies, to be my *femmes-de-chambre*.

"She has made me assume the title of countess, and forsake the name of de la Tour, which was so dear to me. She has supplied its place by your maiden name; but, though I feel a pleasure in being called by the same appellation as you were when a girl, I prefer your present name, as you have often told me of the hardships my father suffered in order to marry you. Seeing myself so surrounded by splendor, I entreated her to allow me to send you some assistance. But how shall I tell you what her answer was! I can only do it, knowing it is your desire that I should always speak the truth, and not prevaricate. She told me, that to send you a little would be doing you no service, and to give you great riches would only trouble and encumber you in the simple life you lead. I sought when I first arrived here, to send you intelligence of myself by different means; but finding no one in whom I could place such confidence, I applied myself indefatigably to my studies, and kind Heaven, who saw my motives for so doing, assisted my endeavors, and enabled me in a short time to acquire both reading and writing. I entrusted my first epistle to some ladies, whom I have every reason to suspect intercepted them, and carried them to my aunt. This letter, through the kindness of one of the boarders, I hope will arrive safe; and I entreat, in answering this letter, you will direct to her whose address I have sent you. My aunt has prohibited my holding any correspondence with anyone who may frustrate the plans which she has laid down for my advantage. I am not allowed to see anybody, even at the grating, except my aunt and an old nobleman, who she says is much delighted with me; but to tell you the truth, I have no partiality for him; even were it possible for me to like anybody here, my choice would not rest on him! I am here in the midst of riches, and yet not a sou to dispose of as I please. They say, that to entrust me with money would be doing me harm, as I might make an improper use of it. Even my dresses belong to my *femmes-de-chambre*, who

dispute about them, even before I have left them off. In the bosom of riches I am poorer than when with you, for now I have nothing to bestow upon the unfortunate. When I saw that these great acquirements which they were instructing me in, would in no wise facilitate me to do good, I immediately flew to my needle, which happily you had taught me to use. I have sent several pairs of stockings of my making, for yourself and Margaret, a cap for Domingo, and a red handkerchief for Mary. I have also sent a packet of pipes and kernels of the different fruits which I have collected, and some seeds which I have gathered in my hours of recreation, from the park and garden belonging to the abbey. I have likewise added the seed of the violet, daisy, crow-foot, poppy, blue bell, and scabious, which I picked up in the fields. The wild flowers here are far more beautiful than those in our isle; but everyone appears to be otherwise engaged, and not to attend to them. I am sure that you and Margaret will be more pleased with these seeds than you were with the piastres which were the cause of our parting, and of so many tears. It will give me great pleasure at some future time to hear that you have apple trees growing among the palm trees, and elms mixing their foliage with that of the cocoa tree; you would then fancy yourself in Normandy, which is such a favorite country with you.

"You enjoined me that I would inform you of my joys and griefs. When I am induced to think of my sorrows, I endeavor to console myself by reflecting that it is by the will of God that you sent me here. But what I feel the most afflicting, is, having nobody who can converse with me about my former life, and that I must not mention it to anybody. My *femmes-de-chambre*, or rather those of my aunt, for they belong more to her than to me, tell me, whenever I wish to turn the conversation to those topics which will ever be most dear to me, that now I am in France I must forget that land of savages. Oh! I shall rather forget myself, than the spot which gave me birth, and where you reside! It is this country that appears to me a land of savages, for here I stand alone, having no one for whom I can feel such love as for you, and which I shall bear with me to the grave.

"My dear and beloved mamma,

"I am your affectionate and dutiful daughter,

"VIRGINIA DE LA TOUR."

"I entreat of you always to consider with kindness Mary and Domingo, for their care of me in my childhood; caress for me poor Fidele, who sought me in the wood."

"Paul was quite astonished when he found that Virginia had not mentioned his name in the letter, she had not even forgot to mention the dog, and yet his name was not inserted; how was this? He knew not that the dearest object of a woman's heart always finds its place at the end.

"In a postscript Virginia particularly recommended the seeds of the violet to Paul's care. She gave him some instructions respecting the nature of the plants and the places most proper to sow them in.

"The violet," said she, "produces a flower of a color similar to its name; it always endeavors to hide itself beneath the surrounding vegetation, but its odoriferous smell makes it easily discovered." She desired him to sow it by the side of the fountain, at the base of the cocoa tree. "The scabious," added she, "is a beautiful gray flower; the corolla is a black ground, spotted with white; it appears in mourning, and for this reason is called the widow's flower; it flourishes best on the coldest and bleakest spots."

"She begged of him, for her sake, to sow it on that rock where they had conversed for the last time, and in remembrance of their separation that he would name it the Farewell Rock.

"She had inclosed the seeds in a purse, the texture of which, though very simple, appeared of double value to Paul, when he perceived the initials P and V entwined together, which was done by two hairs, which he knew, from their beauty, to be Virginia's.

"At the perusal of this amiable girl's letter they all shed tears. Madame de la Tour replied to it in the name of the family, and left it to her discretion either to remain in France or return home; assuring her that they had not known what happiness was since her departure, and that as for herself, she was inconsolable.

"Paul wrote a very long letter to her, in which he told her that he would use every endeavor to arrange the garden in such a manner as she would have directed had she been there, by carefully blending the European and African plants together, as she had entwined their initials together in the purse. He sent her one of the finest of the fruit from the cocoa tree which grew by the fountain, which was now at its full growth. 'I will not,' added he, 'send you any other of the fruits of this isle, hoping that the desire of seeing your native productions may hasten your return.'

"He entreated her to yield to the ardent wishes of her friends, and to his in particular, as it was impossible for him to endure life without her.

"Paul saved these European seeds with the greatest care; he took more delight in the violet and scabious, as Virginia had particularly recommended them to his notice, and as they seemed to bear the greatest analogy to her situation and character. But whether the voyage had injured them, or whether the soil of this part of Africa was unfavorable to their germination, but few of them flowered, and none came to perfection.

"Envy, which is ever the foe to human happiness, and which is the characteristic of the French colonies, diffused throughout the island rumors that made Paul very uncomfortable. The crew belonging to the vessel which brought Virginia's epistle, positively asserted that she was on the point of uniting herself to a nobleman of the court, whose name they could mention; nay, others even declared that she was already married, and that they themselves had been witnesses of it.

"Paul at first despised these mariners' reports, who often delight in spreading false intelligence at those places where they touch. But many of the inhabitants of the island, by their insulting and perfidious sympathy, induced him to listen to this cruel assertion.

"As in some of the novels which he had perused, he had observed perfidy treated as a subject of pleasantry, and as he depended upon the books for representing faithful pictures of the manners of the Europeans, he feared that the daughter of Madame de la Tour had fallen a victim to it; that her mind was now corrupted, and had forgotten all former engagements.

"Thus his increased knowledge only made him more unhappy, and what augmented his fears was, that though several European vessels arrived at the island during the year, not one brought any tidings respecting Virginia.

"This unfortunate young man, almost overwhelmed by the agitation of his mind, frequently came to my house, convinced of my knowledge of mankind, to receive my advice, and that I might either strengthen or remove his uneasiness.

"I live, as I have before told you, at the distance of a league and a half from hence, by the banks of a rivulet which finds its course at the bottom of the sloping mountain. Mine is a solitary life, for I have no companions, neither wife, children, nor slaves. After the loss of the society of a friend whose mind was congenial to my own, that state of life which appears the least miserable is solitude.

"It has always been observed, that those nations who from their politics, their manners, or their forms of government, have been rendered unhappy, have produced numerous classes of citizens who have entirely given themselves up to a solitary life and celibacy.

"Such were the Egyptians after their fall; the ancient Greeks of the lower country; and such now are the Indians, the Chinese, and the modern Greeks, and the greater part of the oriental and southern nations of Europe.

"Solitude induces man to think of natural happiness, while it prevents his mind from dwelling too much on social friendship. In the midst of society, which is so divided by prejudices, the mind is kept in continual agitation, in itself forming a thousand turbulent and contradictory opinions, while each member of society, ambitious and miserable, seeks to rule others. But in solitude he forgets those thoughts which once troubled him, and thinks only of nature and his Maker.

"Thus, when the muddy waters of a torrent which has overflowed the surrounding country, flow into some small basin out of its direct course, there its filth immediately sinks to the bottom, and it resumes its former tranquillity, and becoming transparent, it reflects with their proper tints the neighboring vegetation, and the luminous heavenly bodies.

"Solitude spreads her benefits on the body as well as on the mind. Thus it is, that among the recluse part of mankind you will find the longest lives; look at the Indian Brahmins.

"I think it necessary to human happiness; and it appears impossible to me to enjoy any durable pleasure, from whatever source you may derive it, or guide our conduct by any stable principle, unless we encourage in ourselves an inward solitude, from whence our sentiment seldom steals, and whither the opinion of others never enters.

"It is not my intention to say that each man ought absolutely to live a hermit; his wants form a connecting link between him and others; and it is therefore a duty incumbent on us all to assist our fellow creatures, and to look with a watchful eye on the works of the creation.

"But God has given us such organs and members as are suited to the atmosphere of the globe on which we live: feet to walk with, lungs to inhale breath, and eyes to enjoy the light of the glorious luminaries. But the great Author of Being, who created all men, has reserved for himself the heart, which is the principal organ of the body.

"I pass my days here at a distance from mankind, whom I would have served, but who persecuted me in return. After having passed over the greatest part of Europe, and some states in America and Africa, I at last fixed my abode in this almost isolated island, attracted by its mild atmosphere and exuberant fertility.

"A solitary cabin of my own building, a small field which I cultivate, and this stream which glides before my door, suffice for my wants and my pleasures. To these enjoyments I add a few chosen volumes, whose end is calculated to make me wiser: they serve to pass my time away, and picture to my mind those passions by which mankind render themselves miserable; and by comparing their state with mine, make me feel a kind of negative happiness.

"As one who is tossed by shipwreck on a rock, views with calmness the surrounding scene, so in my sequestered habitation, I view with calmness the storms which are constantly arising in the most populous countries; the sound of the distant tempest only serves to redouble my repose. Although the taste of mankind and mine do not correspond, yet I do not despise, but pity them.

"If I meet with any unfortunate being, I endeavor to console him by my advice, as one that is on the brink of a stream holds forth his hand to a fellow creature who is in the act of being drowned. But I seldom find them listen to my counsels.

"Nature calls in vain to the busy world; everyone substitutes giddy and delusive pleasure, and after having all his life pursued this vain phantom, he complains to Heaven of his want of real enjoyment.

"Amongst the great number whom I have endeavored to recall to nature, I have not found a single person who was not overwhelmed with his own misfortunes. They at first listen to me with attention, in the hope that I shall assist them in acquiring glory or fortune; but finding that I wish them to renounce these, and to run after false and unattainable happiness, they regard my advice no longer;

they blame my secluded life, and by trying to persuade me that they are useful to society, they thus form an excuse for continuing their worldly course.

"Such reasoning serves as a lesson for me; I enjoy my present seclusion, and think not of my former troubles, for which I paid so high a price, nor of fortune, reputation, voluptuousness, or of the tumults which are constantly floating over the world.

"I compare men who dispute with so much ardor for chimeras which have no existence, to the bubbles of this river, which when they come in contact with the banks, break and are never again visible.

"As for me, I allow myself to float gently down the stream to the boundless and eternal ocean of futurity, and by the review of the harmony of nature, I gain more exalted ideas of my Creator, and hope for a more happy destiny in a future existence.

"Although you do not perceive in my hermitage, situated in the middle of the forest, that multiplicity of objects, which, from the elevation of this spot are presented to our view, yet the grounds there are interesting and beautiful, at least to one who, like me, prefers a secluded spot, to an elevation where there are greater and more extensive prospects.

"This stream which flows before my door, runs immediately through the woods; indeed, it appears like a canal shaded by the foliage of the various trees.

"There are the black date, plumb, the ebony tree, and what is here called the dadonea, olive, and gum trees, and the cabbage trees, raising their lofty and naked stems more than a hundred feet high, with their summits crowned by a cluster of leaves, and so much above the other trees, as to appear as if it were one forest piled upon another.

"The liana, entwining its various branches with the foliage of the surrounding trees, forms arcades of flowers and verdant canopies.

"An aromatic odor is emitted from the greater part of these trees, the perfume of which is so powerful, that the scent is retained on the garments of a traveler several hours after quitting the forest.

"At the season of the year when the trees are in full bloom, they appear as if almost covered with snow.

"Towards the end of the summer many foreign birds resort hither, impelled by an incomprehensible instinct: they come from foreign countries across the dreary ocean.

"Here they subsist on the numerous grains, which this island produces in such profusion, and an agreeable contrast is formed between their brilliant plumage and the embrowned foliage of the trees.

"Here are various species of parroquets, blue pigeons, here called Dutch pigeons, monkeys, the domestic inhabitants of the forest, who gambol from one dark branch to another, and who can only be discerned by their gray and greenish skins, and their little black faces, suspending themselves by the tail, and hanging in the air, and leaping from branch to branch, supporting their young in their arms.

"Never does the murderous gun of the sportsman disturb the peaceful retreat of the feathered race. There is only to be heard the sweet warbling notes and joyful tunes of the unknown birds from the southern countries, who catch at a distance the echoes of this forest.

"The river, whose foaming waters dash over a bed of rocks and rush between the trees, reflects in its limpid stream venerable masses of green and shaded verdure, as well as the innocent sports of the simple inhabitants. About a thousand paces from here the different height of rocks forms a most beautiful waterfall.

"Innumerable confused sounds arise from these tumultuous and disturbed waters, and, dispersed by the gathering winds, sometimes they sink, sometimes rise, and at other times send forth deep sounds resembling the hollow tones of a cathedral bell.

"The air, which is constantly refreshed by the moving of the waters, renders the banks of this river more fertile

than the generality of the island, even more so than the mountains. At a considerable distance from the cascade there is a rock, which, though not near enough to hear the dashing of the waters, is sufficiently so to enjoy the sight, and feel the delightful breezes, and listen to the gentle murmurs.

"When the weather was extremely hot, Madame de la Tour, Margaret, Virginia, Paul and myself repaired to the shade of this rock, and there took our dinners. As all Virginia's actions tended to the dissemination of good among others, she never ate any fruit without planting the seeds or kernel in the earth.

"They will come," said she, "one day to trees, and yield their fruit to some traveler, or at least to some poor bird."

"One day after having eaten one of the pawpaws, she sowed the seed at the foot of this rock, and in a short time they sprang up and grew, and amongst them was one which bore fruit.

"This tree did not exceed two feet at the departure of Virginia; but its growth being rapid, had gained the astonishing height of twenty feet in three years, and at the upper part of the stem bore several layers of fruit. Paul, who by chance had strolled to this spot, was delighted as he viewed the lofty tree, which had sprung from a small seed sown from a hand he so tenderly loved. But this pleasure was succeeded by the deepest regret, to think that it stood as a witness to the absence of the beloved girl who had planted it.

"Those objects which we daily view do not remind us of the rapid flight of time; they moulder and decay with ourselves; but it is those which, after having been hid from us for some years, are again presented to our sight: then we are warned of the speedy lapse of our days, and that the stream of life is rushing with increased velocity towards the boundless ocean of eternity.

"Paul was as much troubled and overcome at the sight of this pawpaw tree as a traveler is, upon reaching his native shore, no longer to find his contemporaries, but the children who, when he left them were only infants, now the fathers of families. A thought sometimes rushed across Paul's mind, of hewing down this tree, as it recalled so forcibly to his recollection the length of time which had passed since the departure of Virginia; but sometimes regarding it as an emblem of her benevolence, he embraced the tree, and addressed it in the most passionate terms of love and regret.

"Oh, beloved tree! whose prosperity now exists in this forest, I have witnessed thee with more interest and veneration than I should gaze upon the triumphal arches at Rome, as nature which is every day spreading her devastating hand upon the works and ambition of kings, is ever increasing in this forest, the fruits of the benevolence of this young and virtuous girl.

"It was at the foot of this pawpaw tree that I was sure of meeting with Paul, when he came into my neighborhood. One day I discovered him overwhelmed in the deepest melancholy, and I will tell you the subject of our conversation, if I do not weary your patience by my long digressions, though perhaps you will excuse them on consideration of my advanced age and my last friendships.

"He said to me:

"I am very unhappy. It is now two years and two months since Mademoiselle de la Tour left us, and for the last eight months and two weeks we have received no intelligence of her. She is rich and I am poor; she has forgotten me. I feel a great inclination to follow her; I will go to France, I will embark in the king's service, I will gain promotion and a fortune, and then, when I have gained the title of lord, perhaps Virginia's aunt will not disapprove of the alliance of our families."

Old Man. "Oh, but my dear young friend, have you not frequently told me that you are not of high birth and noble family?"

Paul. "My mother has told me so; as for myself, I know not what is meant by noble birth. I am sure that I

never should have found out that mine had been lower than that of others, or that theirs had been superior to mine.'

Old Man. "Obscure birth will be a barrier to you in France, in every road to aggrandizement or wealth; nor will you even find an entrance into the higher circles."

Paul. "'You have frequently told me, that that which did France the greatest honor, was, that the meanest subject had access to the wealthiest lord, and you have often cited to me examples of the greatest men who have sprung from mean birth, and yet have done honor to their country; you wish to deceive me.'

Old Man. "My dear son, I do not deceive you. I have informed you of the real state of things as they were; but everything is much altered. Now nothing is done in France but from mercenary motives; there is now a small sect of men, who, with sovereign and arbitrary sway rule and govern everything. The king resembles the sun, and the flattering and fawning courtiers eagerly press around him, as the clouds gather about that luminous orb. You may live there without receiving the slightest notice from him. Formerly, when the administration was less complicated, we have frequently heard of such cases. Then, when talents and merits were developed, they were encouraged and succored. But great kings, who choose and duly appreciate such men are very rare. The greater number of kings allow their patronage and influence to be bestowed on those whom their courtiers and favorites choose to select."

Paul. "'But perhaps I shall find one of those favorites at court, who will protect and advance me.'

Old Man. "To gain the favor of the great, you must load them with flattery, and yield to all their ambition and caprice. But I fear you never would succeed, as you are not of high family, and you have been taught to regard truth."

Paul. "'But I would perform the most courageous actions: I would keep my word with the greatest fidelity, be exact and punctual in my duty, zealous and devoted in my friendships, and endeavor to deserve favor and patronage of some one, as such were the means employed in those ancient histories which you have read to me.'

Old Man. "Oh, my dear young friend, among the Greeks and Romans, even in their decline, they respected virtue: but we have many celebrated and distinguished characters of all sorts and classes, yet I do not remember anyone who was patronized by the great. If it were not for our kings, virtue would be trampled under foot in France, and condemned as plebeian; but, as I have told you, formerly virtue was the road to honor, but now distinctions and titles are gained by money."

Paul. "'Oh, but if I could not obtain the patronage of some nobleman, I would try to gain favor with some sect of people, whose opinions and manners I would adopt, in order that I might the more readily gain access to them.'

Old Man. "What, then, would you act the hypocritical part that is played by other men? Would you then give up the pleasures of an untainted conscience for paltry distinctions and riches?"

Paul. "'Oh no, I never could do that: the paths of truth should ever be my guide.'

Old Man. "Ah, but then, instead of loving and admiring you, they would hate and detest you. These united bodies are ambitious and proud, and regard not virtue."

Paul. "'Unhappy that I am—I am repulsed on all sides: I am condemned to pass my wretched life in constant labor, at a distance from Virginia! and here he heaved a heavy sigh."

Old Man. "Make God your guide and patron, and mankind the sect: serve both with fidelity and firmness. Families, sects, people and kings, all have their particular passions and prejudices, and we must frequently yield to them; but let us never deviate from the path of our duty and of truth. But why do you wish to be so distinguished among mankind? It is not a natural sentiment; and if

everyone possessed such a desire, we should all be at war with our neighbors. Be content to fill with honor the station which Providence has allotted you, and be thankful that it is one that does not oblige you to crouch to the great, or to be beholden to the poor. You are stationed in a country where you can live without deceiving, flattering, or rendering yourself contemptible, as the greater part of those do who are seeking their fortunes in Europe. Your state of life does not oblige you to break through any rule of virtue: you may here live sincere, true, patient, temperate, chaste, indulgent, and pious, without your wisdom and prudence being ridiculed. God has given us liberty, health, a good and clear conscience, and sincere friends; and those kings whose favor and patronage you seek, are not so highly blessed."

Paul. "'Oh, it is Virginia that I want; without her I can enjoy nothing, and with her I should enjoy everything. She alone is my birth, my glory, and my fortune. But since her aunt will give her in marriage to someone of a great name, and as by the aid of study and books we become wise and celebrated, I will fly to study, I will acquire sciences, and by my attainments I will faithfully serve my country without crouching to anyone. I will be independent. I shall become renowned, and my glory will only belong to myself.'

Old Man. "But, my son, talents are indeed more rare than birth or riches, and they are undoubtedly of much more value to us, as no power on earth can deprive us of them, and they everywhere conciliate public esteem; but they are dearly bought; they are only acquired by great privations, and by an exquisite sensibility, which always renders their possessor miserable, by the envy and persecution of contemporaries. The clergy envy not the glory of the military; nor the soldier naval honors; but your path will be rendered uncomfortable, as everybody in France imagines that he has talents and wit. You wish to serve men, you say, but those who produce one grain of corn from the earth, render their country more service than by publishing a volume."

Paul. "'Oh, then, she who planted this pawpaw tree, has bestowed more on the inhabitants of this forest, than if she had presented them with a whole library! and he instantly seized the tree, and embraced it with a transport of joy."

Old Man. "The best of books, such as only treat on equality, friendship, humanity, concord, and religion, have, during successive ages, served as a pretext for European discord. How many public and marked exorcisms have been passed upon the authors' names! After the treatment these men have received, who can flatter themselves that their books will be treated better? Do you not remember what was the fate of most of our philosophers? Homer, who was the author of such fine poetry, was obliged to beg his bread, and receive alms. Socrates, who by his wise discourses and amiable lessons rendered such benefit to the Athenians, was poisoned by them. His excellent disciple, Plato, was delivered up to slavery by the very same prince who had before patronized and protected him; and before them, Pythagoras, who extended humanity even to the brute creation, was cruelly burned alive by the Cretans. What do I say? most of these illustrious names have descended to us, disgraced by some barbarous action, which the ungrateful hand of man had been pleased to inflict; and if, among the number, we find any whose glory has descended to us with its original brilliancy, they are those who lived at a distance from their contemporaries. Similar to these statues which have been dug up in a perfect state from the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii, they have only escaped the fury of the barbarians by being buried in the bosom of the earth."

"Thus you see, that to acquire honor by your writings, it is necessary to have much virtue, and even to sacrifice your own life. There are many men in France, whose talents and writings have neither gained for them dignity, wealth, nor an admission to the court."

"There is not so much persecution in this age, so indifferent to everything but wealth and voluptuousness; but virtue gains no ground, as all their views are turned to mercenary objects. Formerly, such men were rewarded with the different ecclesiastical preferments, magistracy, and administration; now, their only resource is to turn authors. But this fruit, so little prized among mankind, is always worthy of its celestial origin.

"Thus it is with books whose particular object is to bring to view hidden treasures, to console the unfortunate, and to record with accuracy the history of nations and of kings. And who, when he beholds riches loaded on unworthy objects, will not console himself with the thought, that his writings will descend from age to age, and from nation to nation, and that they will serve as a barrier to the folly and cruelty of tyrants, and, in the bosom of his obscure dwelling, secure more glory than the greater number of kings, whose memories will sink into oblivion, notwithstanding the flattery and boast of their courtiers?

Paul. "All I desire glory for, is to confer it on Virginia, and to render her dear to all the universe; but you, who have so much knowledge, do pray tell me if we shall ever be married? All the knowledge I desire is, to be able to dive into futurity."

Old Man. "My son, who would, if they knew their future course, wish to live? One single misfortune would fill us with uneasiness, and the sight of one calamity would poison all our preceding days. We must not dive too deep into those objects which surround us, and Heaven, who has given reason to foresee our wants, has given us wants to set bounds to our reason.

Paul. "Do you then say that it is money that is required, to obtain honors and dignities in Europe? I will go to Bengal, and there gain wealth, and then depart for Paris, where I will marry Virginia. I will set sail immediately."

Old Man. "What! will you then leave Madame de la Tour and your mother?"

Paul. "You have frequently advised me to go to India."

Old Man. "Virginia was here at that time, but now you are the only support of her mother and your own."

Paul. "Virginia will, by the aid of her rich relation, assist them."

Old Man. "She has relations more to be pitied than Madame de la Tour, who, for want of assistance, have been obliged to sacrifice their liberty for a maintenance, and pass their lives within the secluded walls of a convent."

Paul. "Oh, what a country is Europe! I wish that Virginia would return. Why does she seek the influence of a rich relative? She was so happy in those cabins! she looked so pretty and so well, when dressed in her red handkerchief, with a garland of flowers round her head! Return, Virginia! quit your splendid palaces and rich domains; return to these rocks; to the shade of these woods, and the cocoa trees. Alas! you perhaps are also miserable!" and he then burst into a flood of tears. "My revered father, hide nothing from me; if you cannot tell me whether it will ever be my lot to be united to Virginia, at least tell me if she still loves me with the same affection that she used to, now that she is surrounded by lords who first speak to the king, and then to her?"

Old Man. "Yes, my dear Paul, I am sure that she loves you now, for several reasons, and more particularly as she is virtuous, and not deceitful. At these words, he, with a transport of joy, clasped his hands around my neck."

Paul. "But do you think that the European women are false and deceitful? Are those comedies and books faithful representations of them?"

Old Man. "In those countries where the men are tyrants, the women are deceitful; as tyranny produces cunning and art."

Paul. "What! are they tyrants to the women?"

Old Man. "They marry them without their consent; a

young girl to an old man; a sensible and prudent woman to an extravagant and dissipated man."

Paul. "Why do they thus marry such as are not suitable—young to old, and old to young?"

Old Man. "The reason is that the greater part of the young men in France have not fortune enough to marry, and they can only acquire it by age. When young they seduce their neighbors' wives, and when they become old, they cannot fix their affection on their own. They are deceivers when young, and when old, they in their turn are deceived. It is thus that Divine justice governs the world: a crime always brings its punishment. Thus the greater number of Europeans pass their lives in this disorderly state, which is increased in proportion as the wealth accumulates into so few hands. The state resembles a garden, where the smaller shrubs cannot grow if they are shaded by large trees; but there is this difference, that the beauty of a garden may result from a small number of large trees; whereas the prosperity of a state depends upon the multiplicity and equality of its subjects, and not in possessing a few wealthy persons."

Paul. "But why is it necessary to be rich before they can marry?"

Old Man. "That they may pass their days in abundance and idleness."

Paul. "And do they wish to live in idleness, and do nothing? I am sure for my part I had rather work."

Old Man. "But in Europe it is thought disgraceful to work; they are only looked upon as mechanics; and he who tills the earth is more despised; indeed a farmer is still lower than a mechanic."

Paul. "What! that which is the most useful to men to be the most despised in Europe? I cannot comprehend it."

Old Man. "Oh, it is impossible for one used to these rural scenes of nature, to understand the depravity of European society. Beauty, virtue, and happiness, may be conceived of; but vice, idleness, and misfortune cannot."

Paul. "Rich people, then, are happy; they find no obstacles to prevent their reaping pleasure from all the objects which surround them?"

Old Man. "Most of them have been accustomed to such indulgences as cost them no trouble. Have you not always found that rest the sweetest that has been purchased by fatigue—to eat when hungry, and drink when thirsty? and love is also strengthened by sacrifices and privations."

"Wealth deprives its owners of these pleasures, by supplying all their wants: united to that ennui which always follows such satiety, pride which is a constant attendant on opulence, and the uneasiness that is felt from the slightest privation, without the greatest blessings being enjoyed."

"The fragrant odor of a thousand roses is remembered but for a moment; but the pain from the prick of a thorn remains for a considerable time."

"A misfortune surrounded by pleasures, is to the rich like a thorn in the midst of flowers; but on the contrary, to the poor, one pleasure in the midst of misfortune, is a flower among thorns; they feel the enjoyment of it. All nature has its balance."

"Which state, to take all circumstances into consideration, do you think the most desirable? to have nothing to hope for, but everything to fear; or nothing to fear and all to hope for?"

"The former is that of the rich man, and the latter of the poor; but these extremes are equally difficult and dangerous; happiness consists in mediocrity and virtue."

Paul. "What do you mean by virtue?"

Old Man. "My son, I mean those who maintain their parents by their labor; there is no need to give you a definition of it. Virtue is an effort made by ourselves for the welfare of others, and with the intention of pleasing our Divine Maker."

Paul. "Oh, how virtuous then is Virginia! Her desire for wealth proceeded from virtue, that she may exercise her benevolence. It was virtue that took her from this island, and it is virtue that will bring her back."

"The thought of her speedy return made his countenance beam with joy, and all his uneasiness vanished.

"The reason that Virginia has not written, is because she will soon arrive. With a fair wind a vessel comes in so short a time from Europe."

"He then enumerated the number of ships which had performed this voyage of four thousand and five hundred leagues in less than three months; and perhaps the vessel in which she had embarked would make it in two.

"Ships are now constructed on so good a principle; the ship builders are more ingenious, and the sailors more expert.

"He then spoke of the plans he intended to adopt for her reception; of the new house which he would build; of the pleasures and surprises which each day would bring, when he should call her his wife.

"His wife! that hope made him feel an ecstasy of joy.

"Then, my dear father, you will do nothing more than is quite agreeable to you. Virginia's wealth will procure for us a number of negroes, who will also work for you. Our house shall be your home; and your only care shall be to amuse and please yourself, and be transported with joy."

"He left me, and flew to his family to make them partners in his pleasure.

"However, in a short time the most agonizing fears succeeded these enchanting hopes.

"The next day Paul returned to me overwhelmed by melancholy; and said:

"I have received no letter from Virginia; had she left Europe, I think that she would have written to inform us of it. Ah, those reports which have been circulated respecting her, have but too much foundation. Her aunt has made her marry a rich lord. She, like many others, has been overpowered by the love of riches. In those novels which draw such faithful pictures of women, virtue is only considered as a subject of romance. If Virginia had had virtue, she would never have left her mother and me. Alas! I pass my life in thinking of her; while I fear her thoughts never rest on me! I am sorrowful, while she is gay! Ah, this thought strikes like a dagger in my bosom! labor is irksome to me; and I feel ennui for all society. Happy should I be if it pleased God to appoint war in India; then I would go there and die."

"My dear son, I replied, that courage which induces us to seek death, is but the fortitude of an impetuous moment. It is frequently excited by the vain hope of gaining the applause of men.

"There is a species of resolution which though more rare, is more necessary to our general happiness, to support us through the various turmoils of this life, without applause or without witness; that is, the inestimable blessing of patience.

"It sustains us not on the opinion of others, or the impulse of our passions: but by the will of God true courage consists in fortitude and patience.

"Alas!" cried he, "I possess not virtue; everything distracts and overwhelms me." I replied, that constant, equal and invariable virtue was not the lot of man.

"In the midst of many passions that irritate us, our minds are often disturbed and obscured; but there is an everlasting spring from whence we may draw delight, and that is literature.

"Literature, my son, is the benign gift of Heaven. It is a ray of this wisdom which governs the universe, and which man, inspired by celestial art, has drawn down on earth.

"Like the effulgent rays of the sun, it enlightens, rejoices, and warms; it is a divine flame; like heat it prepares all nature for our use.

"By the belles lettres we are to learn the history of things, places, men, and times. By its assistance we calm the passions, suppress vice, and excite virtue, by the august example of celebrated men, of which it presents us faithful representations.

"It is the daughter of Heaven, who has alighted on earth, to calm and soften all earthly evils.

"Our greatest authors have sprung up at such periods when there has been the most vice or turbulence; in time of barbarism and depravity.

"My dear Paul, literature has consoled an infinite number of men, more unhappy than you are; as Xenophon who was exiled from his country, after having reclaimed ten thousand Greeks; Scipio Africanus, who was wearied by the calumnies of the Romans, and Lucullus by their intrigues.

"Seek your amusement in books, then, my son. The ancient sages who wrote before our time, are as travelers who have preceded us in the same dreary track of misfortune, and who stretch forth a friendly hand to us, and invite us to join their society, when the world frowns upon us, and we are abandoned by everyone. Oh, what a valuable friend is a good book!

"Alas!" cried Paul, "when Virginia was here, I stood in no need of books. She was not more learned than myself, but when she looked at me, and called me her friend, could I then feel any unhappiness?"

"Certainly, said I, there is no friend on earth so agreeable as a mistress whom we love, and by whom we are beloved. There undoubtedly is something in the cheerful gaiety of a woman that dissipates the dull moments of reflection.

"We see in her face the traits of sweet affection and tender confidence. What enjoyment is not heightened by her partaking of it? Whose frowns are not dispelled by her smiles? and whose anger can resist her tears?"

"I doubt not, that when Virginia returns, you will allow her philosophy to be greater than yours.

"She will be surprised not to find her garden in a more cultivated state; she, who forgot not the embellishment of it even among the gaieties of Paris, and at a distance from Madame de la Tour and yourself.

"Paul's courage was reanimated that he should again so shortly embrace his dear Virginia, and he hastened to his rural occupations, happy in the midst of his labors, pleased with the reflection that they would find a termination so dear to the wishes of his heart.

"On the 24th of December, 1774, at the dawn of day, Paul on rising, perceived the flag on the Mountain of Discovery: this was the place where flags were usually displayed when any vessel was perceived.

"He ran to the town to know if it had brought any intelligence respecting Virginia; he remained there until the return of the pilot of the port, who went as usual to reconnoitre the vessel, and who did not return till evening.

"He brought information to the governor that the vessel was the Saint Geran, of seven hundred tons, commanded by a captain of the name of Aubin, and that it was now four leagues out at sea, and would not reach the harbor of Port Louis till the following afternoon, with a favorable wind, but at present there was a calm.

"The pilot remitted to the governor the letters which this ship had brought from France. There was one for Madame de la Tour, of Virginia's writing.

"Paul seized the letter, and in a transport of joy kissed it, placed it in his bosom, and immediately carried it to the plantation.

"The rest of the family waited at Farewell Rock, and as soon as he perceived them at a distance, he waved the letter in the air, without being able to utter a syllable, and they all assembled around Madame de la Tour whilst she read it aloud.

"Virginia told her mother that she had received much unkindness from her aunt, who wished to marry her against her inclination, which not having consented to, she had disinherited her, and had sent her back at such a time of the year, that she must reach the isle of France at the stormy season; that she had in vain endeavored to dissuade her aunt from it, representing to her the duty she owed to her mother, and to the friends of her infancy; but she only

treated her as a weak girl, whose head was turned by reading novels.

"Now, the only pleasure she thought of, was that of seeing and embracing her beloved family once more, and that she should have gratified this ardent desire that very day, if the captain would have embarked in the pilot's boat, but that he had objected, on account of the distance from shore and of a swell in the ocean, notwithstanding it was a calm.

"Hardly was this letter read, than all the family, seized with an ecstasy of joy, cried 'Virginia is arrived!' mistress and servants all were delighted.

"Madame de la Tour said to Paul, 'Go immediately, and inform our neighbor of the arrival of Virginia.' Domingo lighted a torch, and took the path leading to my habitation.

"It was near ten o'clock at night; I was just extinguishing my lamp and going to bed, when I perceived through the palisades of my dwelling, a light in the forest; soon after I heard Paul's voice calling me. I arose, and was scarcely dressed, when Paul, out of breath, and quite exhausted, threw himself upon my neck, saying:

"Come, come, let us go to the port; Virginia has arrived; the vessel will anchor at break of day.'

"We immediately departed. As we were crossing the sloping mountain, we were already on the road from the Shaddock Grove to the harbor, when I heard footsteps behind us. It was a negro: as soon as he had got up with us we asked him whither he was going with such expedition. He replied:

"I come from that part of the island called the Golden Dust, and hasten to the port to inform the governor that a French vessel has anchored on the coast of Amber Island, and has fired guns of distress, the sea being very stormy.'

The man having thus spoken, continued his route without further stoppage.

"I then said to Paul, let us hasten to the Golden Dust, and meet Virginia; it is but three leagues hence. Accordingly, we sought the road to the north of the island.

"It was oppressively hot, the moon had just risen, and three dark circles were to be seen around her disk; the sky was clouded by a dismal obscurity, and from the frequent and vivid flashes of lightning, we perceived long chains of thick dark clouds, which hung over the center of the island, and which rolled with the greatest rapidity towards the ocean; there was not the slightest breath of air to be felt.

"As we proceeded, we thought we heard a peal of thunder, but on listening more attentively, we discovered it to be the repeated echoes of cannon. These distant sounds, joined to the somber and stormy aspect of the sky, made me tremble; I doubted not but they were signals from a vessel in distress.

"In half an hour we heard no more firing, and this awful silence appeared to me more appalling than the dismal sounds which we had before heard.

"We proceeded without speaking, and without daring to communicate our apprehensions. Towards midnight we reached the beach at that part of the island called Golden Dust. The billows broke with most frightful crash, covering the rocks and sands with their white foam, mingled with sparks of fire. Notwithstanding the dismal obscurity of the night, we distinguished by their phosphoric lights the canoes of fishermen, which had been driven ashore.

"By an opening in the wood we perceived a fire at a short distance from us, with an assembly of the inhabitants around it, who had determined to remain there until morning.

"During the time we were seated there, one of the circle related, that in the afternoon he had seen a vessel driven by the waves towards the isle, but the darkness of the night had hidden it from his view; and that about two hours after the golden rays of the sun had sunk into the west, he had heard the gun of distress, but the sea was so rough that it was impossible for any boat to venture on it, and that soon after, he thought he had perceived the watch-

light, and that in this case he feared the vessel had approached too near the shore, and had passed between the main land and Amber Island, taking that for the Point of Endeavor, by which ships arrive at Port Louis; and if that was the case, he apprehended there was great danger.

"Another islander informed us that he had several times crossed the channel which separates the island of Amber from this coast, and that he had sounded it and found the water good and deep; that a vessel would be as secure there as in the best harbor, and, added he, 'I will lay you a wager of it, that I should rest as quietly there as on land.'

"A third said it was impossible for a ship to enter this channel, which was scarcely navigable to boats. He asserted, that the vessel had anchored, so that if the wind arose, it must either be put out to sea again or reach the port.

"Other islanders started different opinions; but during these contests between the ignorant creoles, Paul and I maintained perfect silence.

"We remained here until twilight dawned upon us, and it was then too hazy to observe anything that floated on the sea, which was covered with a dense fog.

"We perceived at a distance a thick cloud, which we were told was Amber Island, about a quarter of a league at sea.

"Owing to the density of atmosphere we could see nothing but the beach on which we stood, and some peaks of the mountains of the interior of the island, which appeared to be encircled by clouds.

"Towards seven in the morning we heard in the wood the noise of beating of drums. It was Monsieur de la Bourdonnais, the governor, who had arrived on horseback, followed by a detachment of the military, armed with guns, and a number of islanders and blacks.

"He ranged the soldiers on the banks, and ordered them to make a regular discharge.

"It was immediately answered by one from the vessel; we judged that it could be at no great distance from the shore.

"We saw the stern of a large ship; we were so near as to hear, notwithstanding the noise of the waves, the voice of the boatswain at the helm, and the cries of the sailors, who shouted 'Long live the King!' for that is the usual exclamation of the French when in extreme danger, or when highly delighted, as if in the midst of peril they called to their king for help, or as if they wished always to show him that they are ready to perish for his sake.

"As soon as the Saint Geran perceived that we were near enough to render her assistance, she regularly discharged cannon at intervals of three minutes.

"Monsieur de la Bourdonnais ordered fires to be lighted at certain distances on the strand, and sent to all the neighboring inhabitants to seek for provisions, planks, cables, and empty casks.

"In a short time a number arrived, accompanied by their slaves, bringing with them provisions and rigging; some came from the Golden Dust, others from the Flaque and from across the Rampart River.

"One of the most venerable planters approached the governor, and said to him, 'Sir, we have heard all night hoarse noises in the mountains and in the woods; the leaves of the trees moving when there was no wind; sea birds taking refuge on the land; surely all these signs indicate a storm.' 'Well, my friends,' replied the governor, 'we are prepared for it, and no doubt the vessel is so likewise.'

"All around us presaged a dreadful hurricane; the clouds, which were visible at the zenith, were of a somber color, while their skirts were fringed with a copper hue.

"The air re-echoed with the cries of the frigate bird, the cut-water, and many other marine birds, who notwithstanding the obscurity of the atmosphere, sought shelter in the peaceful retreats of the island.

"At nine o'clock P. M. we heard on the side of the ocean the most tremendous noises, as if torrents of water

mingled with loud peals of thunder were rolling with increased fury down the precipices.

"We all cried out 'There is the hurricane!' and in a moment a whirlwind dispersed the heavy mist which hung over the Amber Island and its channel.

"The Saint Geran then appeared full to our sight, with her deck crowded by passengers; her yard and main-top-mast laid on the deck, her flag shivered, her four cables at her head, and one by which she was held at the stern. She had entered between Amber Isle and the main land, and had gone over that chain of breakers in a place where no ship had ever before passed.

"Her head came in contact with the waves which rolled from the open sea, and as each wave rushed into the channel, she heaved so much, that her keel was to be seen in the air, at the same time her stern sinking in the water never rose again, as if it were submerged.

"In this position, driven by the wind and waves towards shore, it was equally impossible for her to return by the track which she had come, or by cutting her cables to throw herself on the beach, from which she was separated by sand banks and breakers.

"Each wave which broke upon the beach advanced roaring to the bottom of the bay, and threw planks to the distance of fifty feet upon the land, and then retiring, left a part of its sandy bed, from which it rolled huge stones with a frightful and tremendous noise.

"The waters, so greatly agitated by the wind, swelled and rose higher every minute, and the channel which lies between the Amber Isle and the Isle of France, presented but one vast sheet of white foam, with yawning pits of deep black billows.

"The foaming waves gathering together in the gulf, rose to more than six feet in height, and the rushing wind sweeping its surface, carried them to a distance of half a league on shore.

"These white flakes, driven as far as the base of the mountain, appeared as if snow had issued from the ocean. The horizon showed every mark of a continued tempest, and the sea seemed confounded with the sky.

"Black and horrible clouds incessantly crossed the zenith with the swiftness of a bird, whilst others were as stationary as the rocks. No spot of azure could be discerned in the firmament; a pale yellow gleam showed the land, sea, and skies.

"From the violent motion of the ship, what had been so long anticipated now happened. The fore cables were broken, and as she was only held by one single anchor, she was immediately thrown upon the rock, within half a cable's length of the shore.

"A general cry of horror issued from among us: Paul started towards the sea, when I seized his arm and prevented him. 'My son,' said I, 'would you perish?' 'Let me go to save her,' cried he, 'or die.'

"As despair had thus deprived him of reason, and in order to prevent his inevitable destruction, Domingo and I attached a long cord around his waist and kept hold of one end. Paul now advanced towards the St. Geran, sometimes swimming, and at other times walking on the breakers.

"Sometimes he comforted himself with the hope of rescuing her, for the sea, by its irregular motion, left the vessel almost surrounded by dry land, so that you might have reached it on foot; but soon after the water rushing with increased impetuosity, covered it, and lifted it upright on its keel, and threw the unfortunate Paul again on shore, with his legs bleeding, his bosom wounded, and half drowned.

"Scarcely had this young man recovered, than he arose, and returned with renewed ardor to the vessel, the parts of which now yawned asunder from the billows.

"All the crew then despairing of their safety, precipitated themselves into the sea, upon yards, planks, hen-coops, tables, and barrels.

"On the gallery of the St. Geran was seen an object of

eternal sympathy, extending her arms to him who was making the greatest efforts to reach her.

"It was Virginia; she had perceived her lover by his intrepidity; the sight of this amiable girl exposed to such imminent danger, filled our hearts with the utmost grief and despair.

"As for Virginia, with a noble and resigned mien, she waved her hand, as if to bid us an everlasting farewell. All the sailors had thrown themselves into the sea, except one who had stripped himself, and was naked and strong as Hercules.

"He approached Virginia with respect, and knelt before her, endeavoring to persuade her to undress; but she repulsed him with indignity, and turned her head from him. Reiterated cries of 'Save her! save her! do not forsake her!' were heard from all the spectators, but at this moment a tremendous wave rushed between Amber Isle and the coast, and advanced roaring towards the vessel, which it menaced with its black sides and foaming head.

"At this awful crisis, the sailor threw himself into the foaming billows, and Virginia, seeing no other prospect than a watery grave, placed one hand upon her clothes and the other on her heart, and lifting up her eyes with a serene resignation, appeared like an angel prepared to take her flight towards the celestial regions.

"Oh, tremendous and awful day! alas! all was lost! The violence of the waves threw many of the spectators to a considerable distance on the beach, who had, from motives of humanity, endeavored to reach Virginia; also the kind-hearted sailor who had tried to save her life.

"This man having reached the sand after an almost certain death, threw himself on his knees and exclaimed:

"Oh, my God! who of thy infinite goodness hath spared my life, I would willingly have resigned it to have saved that amiable and modest young woman.'

"Domingo and myself retired from the shore, carrying with us the senseless and unhappy Paul, with the blood gushing from his mouth and ears.

"The governor ordered the attendance of a surgeon, whilst we returned to the beach in search of the body of Virginia; but the wind having suddenly changed, as is frequently the case during hurricanes, our search was vain, and we had the sad reflection that we should not be able to pay the last sad sepulchral rites to the body of this unfortunate young woman.

"We left the spot overwhelmed with dismay, and our minds bent on our cruel loss; although many other persons had perished, some of the spectators doubted from the awful destiny of Virginia, the existence of a Providence.

"Alas! in life we find so many terrible and unmerciful misfortunes fall upon the most innocent, as to shake the faith of the wisest and best of men.

"During that time they had conveyed Paul, who was now recovering a little, to a house in the neighborhood, until he could be removed to his own house.

"I determined to proceed thither with Domingo, and undertake the melancholy task of preparing the mind of Virginia's mother and that of her friend, for the awful catastrophe which had happened.

"When we entered the valley of the river of Fan-Palms, some of the blacks ran to inform us that the sea had thrown many vestiges of the wreck on the opposite bay.

"We descended thither, and the first object that presented itself to my view, was the body of Virginia; it was partly covered with sand, in the same attitude in which we had seen her for the last time.

"Her features were not materially altered.

"Her blue eyes were closed, and a placid serenity was still to be seen on her countenance; but the pale violets of death were blended with the blushes of virgin modesty.

"One of her hands was placed upon her clothes, and the other, that pressed upon her heart, was so firmly shut, that it was with the greatest difficulty I could rescue from it a small box; but what was my surprise, when I opened it, and found it to contain the miniature of Paul, which she had

faithfully promised him never to forsake as long as she lived and had power to preserve anything?

"I wept bitterly, when I beheld this mark of constancy and fidelity in this unfortunate young girl.

"As for Domingo, he struck his breast in an agony of grief, and rent the air with his piercing cries.

"We carried the lifeless corpse of Virginia to a fish woman's hut, and entrusted it to the care of some poor Malabar women, who paid every attention to washing it.

"Whilst they were occupied in this melancholy office, we in great agitation ascended the rock, and bent our steps towards the two cabins.

"We there found Madame de la Tour and Margaret at prayer, and anxiously waiting to receive tidings respecting the vessel.

"As soon as Madame de la Tour perceived me, she advanced towards me and cried:

"Where is my daughter! my beloved daughter!"

"From my long silence she feared that all was not right, and seeing my tears, she felt convulsive throbbings and agonizing pains, and her voice was only heard in sighs and groans. As for Margaret, she exclaimed:

"Oh, where is my son! I do not see my son!" and she then fainted.

"We ran to her, and having revived her, we assured her that Paul was alive, and under the governor's care; when she was restored, she assisted her friend, who had long continued faintings.

"Madame de la Tour remained the whole night in the most exquisite suffering; and such was her agitation, that I felt convinced that no sorrow was so poignant as maternal sorrow.

"When she recovered her senses, she cast a melancholy and languid look towards heaven.

"In vain did Margaret and myself press her hands in ours, and call her by the most kind appellations; she seemed insensible to such tributes of former affection, and only heaved deep and bitter groans.

"In the morning they brought Paul home, lying in a pal-anquin.

"He had recovered his senses, but was not able to speak.

"His interview with his mother and Madame de la Tour, produced an effect quite different to that which I had anticipated and dreaded; it was of more service to them than all the tender care that we had shown them. One ray of consolation appeared on the faces of these unhappy mothers.

"They flew to meet him, clasped him in their arms, and embraced him; and their tears, which, from the poignancy of their grief had hitherto been suppressed, now flowed in torrents. Paul mingled his with theirs.

"Nature having thus found relief, a long stupor succeeded that convulsive anguish which had before occupied their minds, and they now enjoyed a lethargic repose, similar to that of death.

"Monsieur de la Bourdonnais sent secretly to inform me that the body of Virginia had been brought into the town by his order, and from thence it was to be conveyed to the church in Shaddock Grove.

"I immediately set out for Port Louis, where I found persons assembled from all parts, to be present at the interment, as if the whole isle had lost its dearest ornament.

"In the harbor, the vessels had their yards crossed, their flags hoisted, and fired guns at intervals.

"A detachment of the grenadiers led the funeral procession, their muskets reversed, their drums muffled, and sending forth slow, dismal sounds: the countenance of these warriors portrayed the deepest melancholy, although they had frequently before confronted death with the most courageous feelings; eight young ladies of the most considerable families of the island, dressed in white, and holding branches of palm in their hands, supported the pall of their amiable companion, covered with flowers. This was followed by a number of children, who formed a choir, and chanted funeral hymns; after these, by the governor, all

the principal inhabitants of the town, the field officers, and an immense concourse of people, closed the mournful train.

"The funeral solemnities had been ordered by the administration, who were desirous to honor departed virtue.

"But when the corpse had arrived at the foot of the mountain, and in sight of the two huts of which Virginia had so long been the delight and happiness, all order was disregarded, the chants and hymns ceased, and in the interim nothing was heard but sighs and sobs.

"Numbers of young girls were seen flocking from all parts to touch Virginia's coffin with their handkerchiefs, chaplets, and crowns of flowers, invoking her as a saint; mothers asking of Heaven such a daughter; lovers, one whose heart was constant and faithful as hers; the poor such a friend, and the slaves such a mistress.

"When they arrived at the place of interment, the Madagascar negroes and Mosambian Caffres deposited around the coffin, baskets of fruit, and suspended in the surrounding trees large pieces of stuff, according to the custom of their country.

"The Bengalese and Malabar Indians brought cages full of birds, which they set free around the corpse.

"Thus did the death of this amiable object interest all nations, and such was the power of unfortunate virtue, that it united all sects and castes around her tomb.

"They found it necessary to place a guard around her grave, and to forbid the approach of some of the poor girls, who would have thrown themselves in also; they could now find no comforter, and had no wish to live, but rather to die with her who had been their sole benefactress.

"She was interred near the church of the Shaddock Grove, on the western side, at the foot of some bamboos, where, when coming with her mother and Margaret to mass, she had delighted to repose, seated by the side of him whom she called her brother.

"On the return of the funeral procession, the governor ascended hither, followed by a part of his numerous retinue, and offered to Madame de la Tour and her friend all the assistance that he could render. He expressed much indignation at the conduct of her unnatural aunt, and approaching Paul, he endeavored to console him.

"All I wish for," said he "is your welfare and that of your family; God is a witness of that, my dear Paul; you must go to France, I will obtain a commission for you. In your absence, I will take the greatest care of your mother."

"He then offered his hand, but Paul withdrew his, and turned his head aside, that he might not see him.

"I remained with my unhappy friends, that I might render them all the assistance in my power.

"At the expiration of three weeks, Paul was able to walk, but his grief seemed augmented as he gained strength.

"He was insensible to all around him, his look was vacant, and when spoken to, he made no reply; Madame de la Tour, who was dying, frequently said to him, "Ah, my son, when I look at you, I fancy I see Virginia!"

"At the name of Virginia he trembled, and hastened from her, notwithstanding the entreaties of his mother that he would remain with her friend. He would wander alone into the garden, and seat himself at the foot of Virginia's cocoa tree, with his eyes fixed on the fountain.

"The governor's surgeon, who paid the utmost attention to these two ladies, as well as to Paul, assured me that the only method of restoring them, was to allow them to do what they pleased, to contradict them in nothing, which was the only method of conquering that deep melancholy with which their minds were absorbed.

"I was resolved to follow his advice. As soon as Paul felt his strength returning, he determined to absent himself from the plantation.

"I never lost sight of him, but always walked at a short distance behind him. I desired Domingo to take some provisions and accompany me.

"When this young man had descended the mountain, his joy and strength seemed to return.

"He took that road which led to the Shaddock Grove.

and when he was near the church, in the valley of Bamboos, he ran to that place where he saw new laid earth, fell on his knees, and lifting his eyes to heaven, offered a long and fervent prayer; this seemed to me a trait of returning reason, as this mark of confidence towards the Supreme Being showed that his mind had resumed its natural functions. Domingo and I joined our supplications with his.

"He then arose, and bent his way to the northern coast, without regarding us.

"As I knew him to be ignorant, not only of the interior of Virginia, but also that her body had been rescued from the foaming billows, I asked him why he had chosen the foot of these bamboos as the spot to supplicate the eternal Deity; he replied:

"Because we have so frequently been here together."

"He continued his route as far as the entrance of the forest, when we were surprised by the somber tints of evening. I persuaded him to take some food; we passed the night on the grass, at the foot of a tree. The next day he seemed almost inclined to retrace his steps; sometimes looking at the church in the Shaddock Grove, which stands surrounded by bamboos, he appeared as if he would return; but suddenly plunging into the forest, he renewed his northward course with redoubled ardor. I foresaw his intention, and in vain tried to attract him from it. We reached the Golden Dust coast about noon.

He precipitately advanced towards the shore opposite, where the Saint Geran had perished. At the sight of Amber Island, and its smooth and calm channel, he exclaimed:

"Virginia! ah, my beloved Virginia!" and fell senseless to the ground.

"We carried him to the interior of the forest, where with much difficulty we restored him. No sooner had he recovered his senses, than he made an effort to regain the sands; but having conjured him not to augment his anguish or ours, by these distracting remembrances, he took another direction.

"And for more than a week he sought with the utmost diligence those spots where he had so often wandered with her, who was the companion of his childhood. He retraced the path which they had trodden, when she sought pardon for the slave of the Black River; he gazed also with delight on the banks of the river of the Three Peaks, where she had rested when overcome with fatigue; and at that part of the wood where she was lost.

"All those spots which recalled the inquietudes, the sports or the benevolence of her whom he had so tenderly loved; the river of the sloping mountain; my isolated hut; the neighboring cascade; the pawpaw tree which she had planted; the mossy downs where she loved to run; and the sequestered spot where she used to sing, made him again shed tears; and those echoes which formerly resounded with shouts of joy, now only reiterated the mournful accents of 'Virginia! oh, my dearest Virginia!'

"During the time that he wandered about in this wild and distracted manner, his eyes became hollow; his complexion assumed a yellow tint; and his health rapidly declined.

"Persuaded that our present sufferings are increased by the remembrance of our former pleasures, and that our passions gather strength by solitude, I resolved to remove my unhappy friend from those places which reminded him of his bereavement, and to take him to a part of the island where there was much dissipation and gayety.

"With this view I led him to the inhabited heights of Williams, which he had never seen, where agriculture and commerce created much bustle and variety. A number of carpenters were employed in this wood in hewing down trees; others in sawing them into planks; carriages constantly passing and repassing; large droves of cattle feeding in the adjacent meadows, over which a number of habitations were scattered.

"In some parts, the elevation of the soil was favorable to the culture of several of the European plants.

"On the plains were to be seen corn nodding its golden

head, with every breath of wind, and strawberry plants, and hedges formed of loose trees.

"The purity and freshness of the air produced the most salubrious effects on the constitution of an European. From the tops of these mountains, situated in the middle of the island, and surrounded with thick forests, neither the sea, Port Louis, nor the church in the Shaddock Grove were to be seen, all which objects so forcibly recalled to his mind his irreparable loss.

"Even the mountains, which appear of various shapes on the side of Port Louis, on the plains of Williams, seemed like a promontory stretching itself into a long and perpendicular line, from whence several lofty pyramidal rocks tower their aspiring heads towards the clouds.

"It was to these plains that I conducted Paul. I kept him constantly in action, continually walking with him, both in rain and sunshine, day and night, purposely leading him into the most impenetrable depths of the forest, taking him over untilled fields, that fatigue of body might alienate his mind from those overwhelming thoughts and reflections, by the novelty of the road we passed, and in seeking the paths we had lost.

"But a lover's mind finds everywhere the trace of its beloved object.

"Night and day, the retirement of solitude, or the bustle of commerce, even time itself, which carries with it so many remembrances, could not obliterate her from his mind, which, like the needle touched by the load-stone, however it may have been forced into agitation, is no sooner left to repose, than it reverts to the pole, by which it was attracted.

"When we were wandering in the midst of the plains of Williams, and I inquired of Paul: 'Where we should then go?' he would turn towards the north, and reply, 'There are our mountains, let us return to them.'

"I saw that all the methods that I had employed were fruitless; and I found that the only resource left was to combat his passion by the arguments that reason suggested. I replied:

"Yes, there are the mountains where your beloved Virginia dwelt, and here is the miniature which you gave her; and which she pressed to her heart till the moment of her dissolution; thus you have the consolation of knowing that her last thought rested on you."

"I then presented Paul the small picture, which he had given to Virginia, at the foot of the fountain by the cocoa trees.

"At the sight of this, a convulsive joy appeared on his countenance. He eagerly seized the portrait, and pressed it to his mouth. Then his bosom throbbed, his eyes were filled with tears which could not flow. I said to him, 'My dear son, listen to me, I who am ever your friend, and who was also Virginia's; and who, amidst your aspiring hopes, have endeavored to fortify your mind against the unforeseen accidents of human life. What is it you so bitterly deplore? is it your own misfortune, or that of Virginia?'

"Your misfortune is indeed very severe; you have lost one of the most amiable girls; and who would have shone under the title of woman. She who sacrificed her interests for yours, who preferred you to all other that fortune could bestow as the only recompense worthy of her virtues. But are you not aware, that that object from whom you expected to derive such pure happiness might have been to you the source of much uneasiness? She was without fortune, and disinherited. You had nothing to share with her but the fruits of your labor. Become more delicate by her education and misfortune, you would have seen her daily sinking beneath the efforts to soften and to alleviate your fatigues. Had she had any children, your cares would have been augmented, by the difficulty of sustaining your aged parents, and a young and increasing family. You will tell me that the governor would have assisted you. But how can you ascertain that in a colony, which so frequently changes its administrators, you will often find such a one as M. de la Bourdonnais? If a governor had come who was

destitute of principles and morality; and if to obtain a miserable livelihood, your wife had been obliged to flatter and court him; or if she had been sick and weakly, then you would have been to be commiserated; and perhaps, from her beauty and virtue, you would only have had jealousy and vexation from those from whom you expected support.

“But you will perhaps say, that happiness does not depend upon riches; but to protect a beloved object, which attaches itself to us in proportion to its weakness, that your pains and sufferings would have served to endear you to each other; and your passion would have gathered strength from your mutual misfortunes. Undoubtedly virtue and affection are increased by bitter draughts. But Virginia is now no more! yet there remains those whom she dearly loved, her mother and yours; and your excessive grief will hasten them to their grave. Seek your happiness by assisting them, as that was always her delight. My son, the virtuous ever find pleasure in beneficence. The project of pleasure, rest, repose, riches, or glory, were only destined to delude that weak and feeble traveler, man. See how one step towards the acquisition of fortune has thrown you into misery and despair. It is true that you were opposed to it; but who could have foreseen that it would thus have terminated? The invitations of a rich and aged relation, with the advice of an experienced governor, and the exhortations and authority of a priest, decided the fate of poor Virginia. Thus we run into danger, deceived by the prudence of those who advise us. Undoubtedly it would have been better, had we not followed their counsel, or listened to their voice, or to the hopes of a deceitful world. But all of whom we see so busily employed on these plains, or of those who seek their fortune in India, or who are enjoying themselves in luxury in Europe; all are destined one day to part with that which is most dear to them, riches, fame, wife, children, or friends.

“The misfortunes of most are embittered with the reflection, that they are brought on by their own imprudence. But this you have not to reproach yourself with. You were faithful to her; you have in the flower of youth, the prudence of age, in not deviating from the path of nature. Your views were legitimate, because they were pure, simple, and disinterested; and you had a sacred right to Virginia, which no fortune could have waived. You have lost her, and it was neither by your folly, your avarice, nor your pride; but it was God alone, who employs the passions of others to be the means of depriving us of our dearest comforts; God, to whom we owe all, to whom everything belongs, and whose goodness is ever watching and consoling us in our misfortunes, although they are brought on by our own misconduct.

“But you may say, that you have not deserved it. Is it then the loss of Virginia, her death or her present state, that you so deeply lament? She has fallen a victim to that which so frequently attends virtue, beauty, and even empires. The life of man, with all its futile projects, is like a tower that rises in the air, which has death for its summit. At her birth she was condemned to die; and happy is she to have cut the thread of life before her mother, or yourself; to escape following so many dear and tender friends to the grave.

“Death is a termination of our sorrows to which we must all look forward. It is that dark cloud which overshadows life; it is in the sleep of death that we find rest from all the diseases, griefs, misfortunes, and fears that constantly agitate our frail bodies. Examine those men who appear the happiest, and you will see that their pretended felicity is dearly bought. Public commiseration for domestic trials—fortune for the loss of health—pleasure is hardly earned, when it is acquired by continual sacrifices, and how often do we find at the latter end of those who have devoted themselves to the interests of others, that are surrounded by false friends and avaricious relatives? But, my dear Paul, Virginia was happy to the last; when here with us, the works of nature ever pleased

and delighted her; and when at a distance, virtue supplied the place of nature; and at that awful crisis, when we beheld her perishing, she was still happy; for when she cast her eyes on these shores, which had ever been so dear to her, and when she beheld your intrepidity to rescue her, she saw how dear she was to us.

“She prepared for the future, by the recollection of the innocence of her life, and thus received the reward which Heaven reserves for virtue; she possessed a fortitude superior to all danger, and was enabled to meet death with a serene and composed countenance. My dear son, God gives virtue trials to sustain, to show that although they serve as a proper warning, they do not exclude the possessor from true happiness and glory.

“When God wishes to preserve an illustrious reputation, he usually presents the owner with a hundred difficulties and troubles; thus, his courage is an example, and the recital of his misfortunes ever excites pity from succeeding ages. A good and clear conscience is an everlasting monument, when all earthly things are passed away; and when the names of the greater number of the kings have sunk into oblivion, virtue will still be remembered.

“But Virginia still lives. Ah! my son, though there are so many changes in this world, yet there is nothing lost. No human art could create the smallest particle of dust; and that which is good, sensible, loving, virtuous, and religious, can never be lost; it is of an indestructible nature. Ah! if Virginia was happy here, far more so must she be there. There is a just and righteous God, my son; it is unnecessary for me to endeavor to convince you of it, as all nature speaks so plainly. It is the depravity of mankind that induces him to exercise that power which he holds.

“But His love is in your heart, as His works are before your eyes. Do you not think then that he will reward Virginia? Do you not think that a power that inclosed so noble a heart in a form so elegant, could not extricate her from the waves? or he who has arranged the general happiness of men by laws which are unknown to you, could he not also propose a law, equally distant from your thoughts, for the solace and comfort of Virginia? When you were yet unborn, had you been capable of thinking, you would not have formed an idea of such an existence; and now that we have commenced this dark and dreary journey, could we foresee what would befall us, how dismal would be our prospect! There is not a drop of water in the vast ocean which is not full of living creatures, and all, however small, are still under his watchful providence. Undoubtedly virtue will meet with its just recompense. Virginia now is happy. Ah! if from the abode of angels she could look upon you, she would tell you as she did in her farewell:

“Oh, Paul, this life is a life of sorrow and of trial. I was always faithful to the laws of nature, love and virtue; I crossed the boundless ocean to obey the will of my parent. I renounced riches to preserve my fidelity, and I rather lose my life than violate my promises. Heaven found that I had fulfilled my career, by my early dissolution. I have escaped poverty, calumny, and the affliction of seeing others in distress. None of this world's troubles can now reach me, and yet you pity me. I am pure and unalterable as a ray of light, and you wish to recall me into darkness.

“Oh, Paul, oh, my dear friend, think of those days of happiness, when we felt the delightful sensations excited by the unfolding beauties of nature, and by the rising sun, who spreads forth his diverging rays of warmth to assist vegetation; we felt a delight, but could not account for the cause. In our innocent wishes we desire sight to enjoy the richness of colors of the aurora, smell to enjoy the perfumes of the flowers, hearing that we might listen to the concerts of our birds, and a heart to appreciate these blessings.

“Now at the source of beauty my mind intuitively tastes, sees, hears, touches, what before we could only be made sensible of through the medium of our feeble organs. Ah, what language is there that can describe those shores of eternal bliss, which I inhabit for ever: all that infinite

power and celestial bounty could create to console an unhappy being, and all the friendship of infinite numbers exulting in the same felicity can produce: we enjoy a happiness without alloy.

"Support then the trial that is allotted to you, that you may heighten the enjoyment of your Virginia by love, which will know no termination, by hymeneals which will be immortal there. I will soften your regrets and dry your tears.

"Oh, my dear Paul, my dear husband, raise your thoughts towards an infinite duration to bear the evils of a moment."

"My own agitation choked my utterance, and Paul, steadfastly fixing his eyes upon me, cried, 'She is no more, she is no more!' and a long fainting fit succeeded this exclamation.

"When restored to himself, he said, 'Since death is so good, and Virginia is so happy, I wish also to die, that I may join her.'

"Thus my endeavors to console him only nourished his despair; I was like a man who attempts to save a drowning friend; sorrow had overwhelmed his mind.

"I led him back to his own habitation, and there found his mother and Madame de la Tour in an increased state of languor; Margaret seemed to droop most.

"Oh, my good friend," said Margaret, "methought last night that I saw Virginia dressed in white amidst delicious bowers and gardens. She said to me, 'I enjoy a felicity that would excite envy.'" She then approached Paul, and carried him off with her, and when I was endeavoring to rescue my son, I felt as if I had quitted this world, and was soaring with them to celestial regions. I wished to bid my friend adieu; but I perceived that she, Mary and Domingo, were following me. What is still more strange, Madame de la Tour had on the same night a similar dream."

"I replied, 'My dear friend, I believe that nothing happens without the permission of God. Dreams sometimes predict truth.'

"Madame de la Tour recited her dream, which very much resembled that of Margaret, and happened on the same night.

"As I had never remarked anything like superstition in these two persons, I was much affected with the resemblance of their dreams, which I had little doubt would soon be realized.

"This opinion, that truth is sometimes presented to us under the semblance of a dream, is generally believed in most nations: our most renowned men have added their testimony. Amongst them, Alexander, Cæsar, the Scipios, the Catos, and Brutus, who possessed strong and active minds.

"The Old and New Testaments furnish us with many examples of the realization of dreams.

"My experience has shown me how frequently dreams have been the forerunners of some intelligence that interested us, and if the reason of man is the image of that of God, and man finds means to carry his intentions to the other end of the world by secret and hidden ways, why should not the Almighty employ means to gain the same end?"

"Why should we then disbelieve dreams? Life, which is but a series of vain and passing phantoms, can we consider it anything but a dream? and the dreams of the friends shortly realized.

"Paul died two months after Virginia, who was ever the object of his conversation.

"Margaret finished her earthly career eight days after her son, with that tranquillity which virtue alone can bestow.

"She bade Madame de la Tour the most tender farewell, 'in the hope,' said she, 'of an eternal reunion;' and she added, 'that death was one of our greatest blessings, and that we ought to desire it.'

"If life is a punishment, we should wish for its speedy termination; if it be a trial, we should be thankful that it is a short one.

"The governor took care of Mary and Domingo, who were no longer fit for service, and did not long survive their mistress. Poor Fidele pined to death at the loss of his master.

"I conducted Madame de la Tour to my dwelling, and she bore her calamities with the most perfect resignation.

"She had consoled Paul and Margaret to the last, seeming to forget her own sorrows. When they were no more, she used to talk of them as of beloved friends, from whom she was not far distant.

"She survived them but a month; and far from reproaching her aunt on account of those afflictions of which she had been the cause, she prayed to God to pardon her, and to appease that remorse which her cruelty would probably awaken in her heart.

"I heard by several ships which arrived from Europe, that this cruel woman, haunted by a troubled conscience, found life almost insupportable.

"She accused herself as the murderer of her niece and her mother, and was at times bereft of her reason. Her relations, to whom she manifested the greatest dislike, undertook the management of her fortune; and after having been confined within the walls of a lunatic asylum, with sufficient reason to feel all the pangs of her situation, she at length expired in agonizing despair.

"The body of Paul was placed by the side of Virginia, and on that sacred spot the remains of their affectionate parents, and their faithful servants are laid.

"No marble monument covers their graves, and their virtues need no inscription to record them; but their memory is engraven on our hearts in indelible characters; and surely, if those pure spirits still take an interest in what passes upon earth, they love to wander beneath the roof of those dwellings which are inhabited by industrious virtue, to console the poor who are discontented with the fate which God has allotted them, to cherish in the hearts of lovers the sacred flame of fidelity, a taste for the blessings of nature, the love of labor, and the fear of riches.

"The voice which is so often silent with regard to the monuments that are reared to the glory of kings, has given to some parts of this island a name that will immortalize the loss of Virginia.

"Near the Amber Isle, on the sand banks, there is a spot called the pass of St. Geran, the name of the vessel in which she perished.

"The point of that long tract which you may perceive at the distance of three leagues from hence, half covered with the waves, which the St. Geran could not double the evening preceding the hurricane, is called the Cape of Misfortune and before us, at the foot of this valley, is the Bay of the Tomb, where Virginia was found buried in the sand, as if the waves had sought to restore her body to her afflicted family, that they might show it the last sad duties on its native shore, whose it had so long been.

"Ye faithful lovers, who are so tenderly united! unfortunate mothers! beloved family! those trees which have sheltered you with their foliage, those fountains which have flowed for you, those mossy banks on which you have reposed, all will deplore your early fate.

"None since have dared to cultivate this desolated ground, or repair these isolated cottages. Your goats have become wild, your orchards are destroyed, your birds have fled, and nothing is heard but the cries of the sparrow hawks who hover around the rocks. As for myself, since I no longer behold you, I wander about desolate and alone. I am as one who has lost all his friends, or as a father bereft of his offspring."

In uttering these words the good old man retired, shedding tears:—mine had often flowed during the melancholy narration.

[THE END.]